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VENTURA & ADONIS: HOW BLASSIE'S DEADLY ONE-TWO PUNCH WILL TOPPLE BACKLUND

IVAN KOLOFF VS. WRESTLING II: THE COLD WAR EXPLODES!

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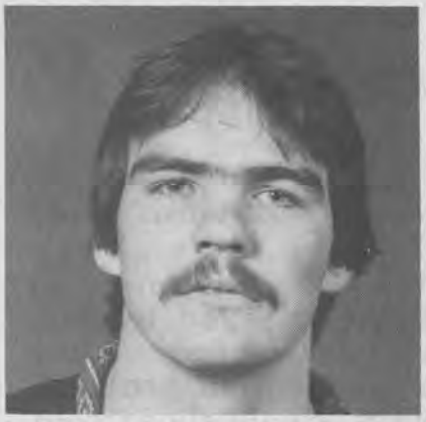

PAGE 26: UNDERSTANDING SON

PAGE 44: SKILLED MANIAC

COVER PHOTOS BY BILL APTER & BRAD McFARLIN

CENTERFOLD BY BILL APTER

Next issue of PWI on sale June 1

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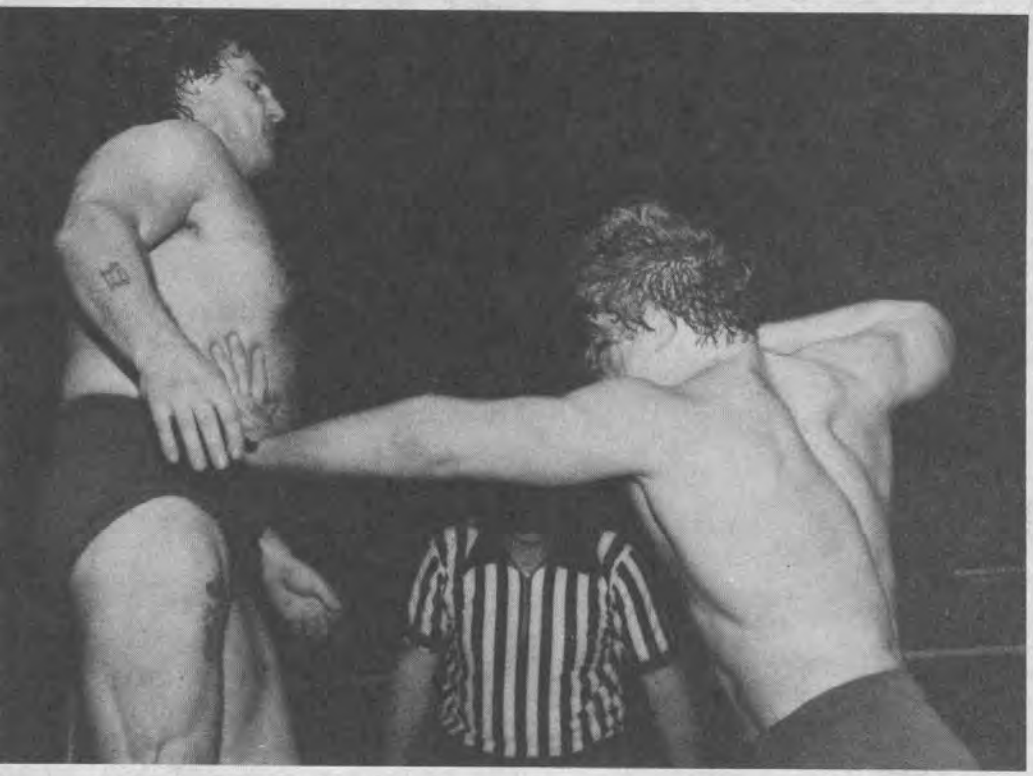

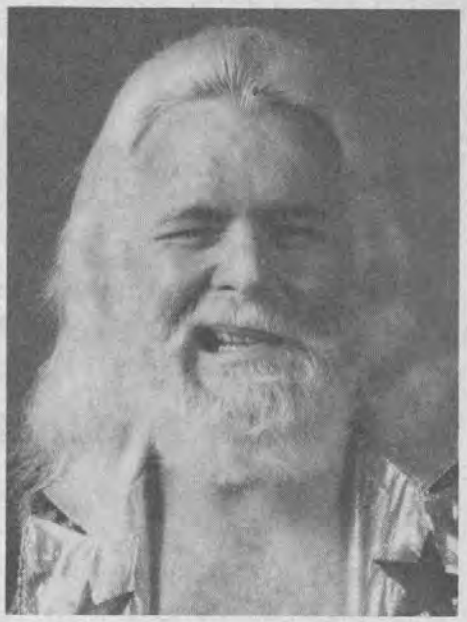

A bloody Bob Backlund fires a right at Adrian Adonis' midsection (above). Reader Eddie Fenton believes Backlund showed little class in this title defense and ultimately had his belt saved by the referee. Jimmy Valiant (above right) is the subject of a poem by Patricia Pearson.

WRESTLING LESSON

I'd like to congratulate Peter King for his hard-hitting March 1982 "King's Court" on Adrian Adonis.

In a recent match at Madison Square Garden, Baby Bob Backlund put his belt on the line against Adrian Adonis. Backlund wrestled like a rule-breaker and Adonis put on a lesson in scientific wrestling. Adonis won the decision, but Backlund had the referee on his side again. The match was stopped because Backlund was bleeding and the belt did not change hands.

Adrian Adonis is the best scientific wrestler in the mat sport today. Good luck to Adonis and to Freddie Blassie.

EDDIE FENTON
Hazlet, NJ

POETRY IN MOTION

I have met Jimmy Valiant and he is really a nice guy. Why don't nice guys get their pictures in this magazine? I always see pictures of bad guys. What have *they* done for the sport of wrestling? Handsome Jimmy is an outstanding wrestler, a fine person, and a terrific rock star. I wrote a poem about him. Please print it and a picture of him:

Handsome Jimmy, as we
know him by,
Came from the Big Apple up
in NY,
With flashy clothes and a
great big smile,
Soon Prince Valiant's fans
would all go wild.
The fans all love him, and
we wish him well,
He's ready to fight before
he hears the bell.
He is so nice and he is
so sweet,
Jimmy Valiant just can't
be beat.
Tall, blond, and handsome
he'll always be
Handsome Jimmy Valiant,
the boy from NYC.

PATRICIA PEARSON
West Pelzer, SC

(Continued on page 50)

BIG MUSCLES? In 7 days

my method of DYNAMIC-TENSION starts giving you results you can *feel* and your friends will *notice*. Big, useful muscles. Gain pounds in weight where needed. Lose "pot belly." Take a good honest look at yourself! Are you proud of your body – or are you satisfied to go through life being just "half the man" you could be? No matter how ashamed you are of your present physical condition – or how old or young you are – the "sleeping" muscles already present in your body can turn you into a REAL man! Believe me, I know – because I was once a skinny, scrawny 97-pound half-alive weakling! People used to laugh at my build and make fun of me. I was ashamed to strip for sports or the beach . . . shy of girls . . . afraid of healthy competition.

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THAT MAN IS THE WORST NUISANCE ON THE BEACH
LISTEN HERE. I'D SMASH YOUR FACE... ONLY YOU'RE SO SKINNY YOU MIGHT DRY UP AND BLOW AWAY
THE BIG BULLY! I'LL GET EVEN SOME DAY
OH DON'T LET IT BOTHER YOU, LITTLE BOY!
DARN IT! I'M SICK AND TIRED OF BEING A SCARECROW! CHARLES ATLAS SAYS HE CAN GIVE ME A REAL BODY. ALL RIGHT! I'LL GAMBLE A STAMP AND GET HIS FREE BOOK!
BOY! IT DIDN'T TAKE ATLAS LONG TO DO THIS FOR ME! WHAT MUSCLES! THAT BULLY WON'T SHOVE ME AROUND AGAIN!
THERE'S THAT BIG STIFF AGAIN, SHOWING OFF IN FRONT OF GRACE AND THE CROWD. WELL IT'S MY TURN THIS TIME!
WHAM! - NOW IT'S YOUR TURN TO DRY UP AND BLOW AWAY!
OH, MAC! YOU ARE A REAL MAN AFTER ALL!

KING'S COURT

By Peter King

Dino Bravo acknowledges the cheers of the fans as he lifts The Destroyer for an airplane spin. The popular Canadian International champion is considering a return to the United States.

MONTREAL SITS MAJESTICALLY on the banks of the Saint Lawrence, 400 miles north of New York City. It is only a seven-hour trip by car from New York, yet it feels as if you have entered another world. Most of the people speak French and everybody is polite. The subways are clean. It is a big city that works.

Like other major cities, Montreal boasts great sports attractions. The Canadians are a superb hockey team that has won more world championships than any other hockey club in history. The Expos are given a good chance to make it to baseball's World Series this year. But the only sport popular year round is wrestling.

No wonder. Montreal has a tradition of wrestling excellence. Some of the most historic and exciting bouts ever have occurred here. The world title has changed hands many times in this city. Virtually all of wrestling's greats have appeared here through the years.

But today, Montreal fans feel they are watching the best wrestler this city has ever seen. His name is Dino Bravo, and he is no stranger to American wrestling fans.

"They still remember me?" Bravo asked modestly after a grueling Canadian International title defense against Sailor White. Yes, Dino, American fans still remember you. They remember your great accomplishments in Los Angeles. They remember your thrilling bouts in the Mid-Atlantic. They will never forget how you set the WWF on fire only a few years ago. And those fans who saw you are thrilled with the success you are having today.

"The Montreal fans are great," Bravo said. "I tell you, the opposition here is brutal. Tonight, the doctor says I'll need 12 stitches to close the cut on my head. A couple of months ago, I was in an even more savage match against Abdullah the Butcher. It's lucky the fans support me. During a tough match, you need all the help you can get."

As Bravo was stitched by the ringside physician, Gino Brito, Tony Parisi, and the great Edouard Carpentier watched. "You are not so pretty anymore, eh?" Carpentier said as everyone laughed. The

(Continued on page 52)

RINGSIDE

With Bill Apter

CAPTAIN LOU ALBANO knows how hard it is to control The Samoans. After taking Afa and Sika out of the jungle, molding them into wrestlers, and leading them to the WWF tag team championship, The Samoans suddenly stopped taking orders from the Captain.

Ernie Ladd, who had been searching for a tag team to manage, decided to take a chance on the talented—but uncivilized—duo. Ladd purchased their contract from Albano and brought them to Louisiana, where they quickly captured the Mid-South tag team belts.

The relationship between Ladd and Afa and Sika seemed to be going smoothly—until The Samoans dropped the belts to Junkyard Dog and Mike George.

Then all hell broke loose.

The Samoans were seen talking to General Scandor Akbar behind Ladd's back. Reportedly, Akbar has been interested in The Samoans for over a year and had been waiting for the opportunity to approach them with an offer.

Recently, The Samoans viciously attacked Ernie Ladd, leaving the 6'9" 320-pound wrestler/manager sidelined indefinitely with a severe leg injury. Though Akbar denies having tampered with The Samoans while still under contract to Ladd (something the NWA bylaws forbid), the evidence we have shows otherwise.

One day after Ladd officially terminated his contract with The Samoans, Akbar called a press

Ernie Ladd (above left) has terminated his contract with The Samoans (above center), who have since aligned themselves with Scandor Akbar (above right). Controversy swirls in the Mid-South.

conference to make two announcements: First, that he would be taking over as The Samoans' manager. Second, that a rematch with Junkyard Dog and Mike George had been signed.

The Samoans, with outside help from both Akbar and his 6'8", 450-pound protege, Crusher Broomfield, regained the Mid-Southern belts in a wild affair.

One further note: Ernie Ladd was seated at ringside and he did not look happy!

***

For the first time in their careers, arch rivals Dusty Rhodes and Harley Race battled—with no belts on the line. But that certainly didn't lessen the intensity of the struggle. Kansas City fans should be talking about this one for a while.

Here's a switch. Texas fans are rooting for The Spoiler and booing American champion Bugsy McGraw! . . . A real classic scientific encounter took place in Minnesota where former Olympian Brad Rheingans took on

Dusty Rhodes wrestles Harley Race in Kansas City with nothing on the line but their pride.

veteran Billy Robinson. When it was all over, both men received a standing ovation . . . Bobo Brazil has toppled John Valiant to win the WWA title in the Midwest.

Fans are still in a state of shock after seeing Blackjack Mulligan Sr. turn bad during his match against Big Red in Atlanta. "I'm tired of being a nice guy," Mulligan said.

(Continued on page 54)

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3. Diving and swimming burn additional calories and amplified the heating effect of the special rubber. *Shrink Wrap comes with its own easy exercise program for you to shed unsightly inches even more rapidly.*

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"I lost 6 inches in 16 days! I've worn it to work, playing softball, tennis, exercising, and just about anything I want to do. My weight dropped 13 pounds! I lost 4 inches from my waist alone!"

Mrs. Mildred C. Cable—Land O'Lakes, Fla.
"I went from a size 20½ dress down to a 12! I tried every method. With Shrink Wrap, the exercise program and a sensible diet, I lost 52 pounds! I lost 8 inches from my waist and 11 inches from my hips! Now, I tell all my friends about the Shrink Wrap System!"

Ms. Loretta Dene Fair—Pontiac, Mich.
"My total inches lost were 34½" off waist and hips! I've been overweight for as long as I can remember. The Shrink Wrap System worked miracles! 18½" off my waist, 16" off my hips, all in only 8 months. Shrink Wrap even helped me to stop overeating and stop snacking. I lost 124 pounds! I'm a new woman!"

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Dr. J. Lee Briers—New Castle, Delaware
"I lost 5" from my waist and 6" from my hips over a 12 day period. My weight loss was 18 lbs."

Helena Smith—Vandalia, Mich.
"I lost 5" off my waist and 5" off my hips! I'm amazed at the way the Shrink Wrap System works!"

Robert N. Nilsen—Mechanicsburg, Pa.
"I lost 9 pounds and 4 inches off my waist in 2 weeks! It's just unbelievable that it took so little time and effort!"

James Carlisle—Manager, Karate School of Champions, Wilkensburg, Pa.
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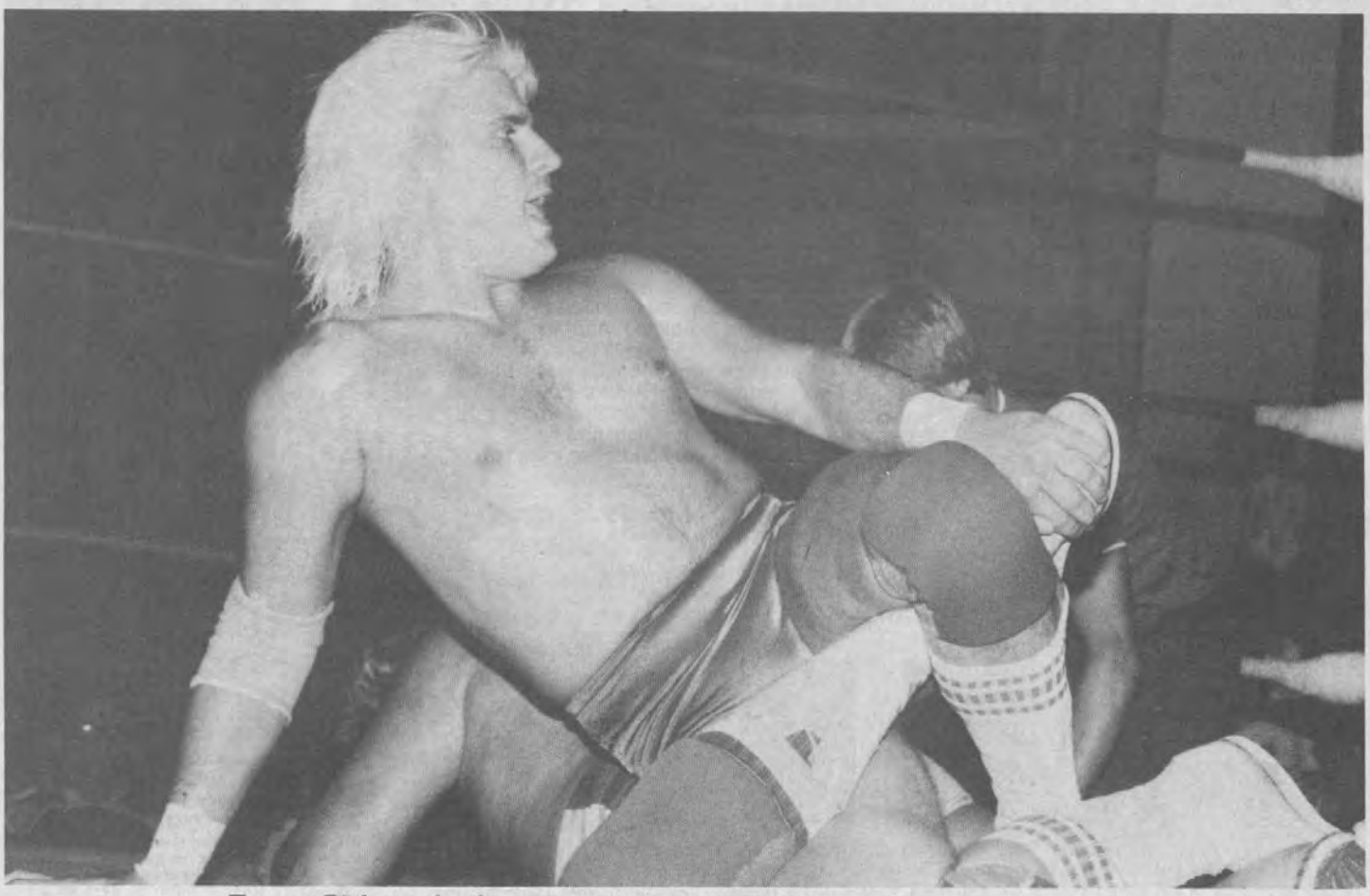
By Stu Saks



Tommy Rich sparks the curiosity of wrestling fans more than any of his peers. The Summer 1982 edition of WRESTLING SUPERSTARS, containing 10 pages of personal information and photographs from his youth, is literally a dream-come-true for Tommy's loyal fans.

THE LESS WE know about some wrestlers, the better it is. I mean, who really cares what sports Sgt. Slaughter played in high school? Or what kind of music soothes George Steele's savage breast? Or what type of woman Killer Khan prefers to date?

Such matters are best left to the imagination. (Slaughter lettered in field hockey and synchronized swimming; Steele can't listen to anything but Judy Garland singing "Somewhere Over The Rainbow"; and Killer Khan . . . oh, I don't even want to think about it.) What's the difference? No one cares, anyway.

There are those wrestlers whom you would rather not recognize as human beings and never want to read about. There are those you are interested in and you enjoy reading about.

And then there is Tommy Rich.

For every 10 letters that cross my desk, four concern Tommy Rich.

(Continued on page 56)

Now—enjoy a life of unbelievable riches, lasting love and constant protection with the secrets in this startling WITCH BOOK—

THE MAGIC POWER OF WITCHCRAFT

Whatever it is you need or want, Witchcraft can get it for you quickly, easily, and automatically, say these experts. You'll discover how it can bring abundant and overflowing wealth, find or bring back a lover, ward off evil influences, and much more—step-by-step in plain English, with complete easy-to-follow instructions!

Yes . . . Witchcraft! Every time you hear the word it brings with it the feelings of deep occult secrets—secrets that you would like to know so that your life can be better; so that your enemies will stop bothering you; so that serenity, love, power and comfort can be yours!

THE MAGIC POWER OF WITCHCRAFT lays bare these secrets for the first time! Do you want a bank account bursting at the seams with money? A love life that would make a sultan envious? Supreme power to crush your enemies and reward your friends? What would it be worth to you to utter a simple incantation that would cause any pain to vanish? Or say another, and immediately recover some lost object?

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Witchcraft can bring your heart's desire! You can use it to heal someone, influence the boss to give you that raise, or make someone stop bothering you! It's easy! The easiest thing in the world! You don't have to be wealthy or super-intelligent to get started! Thousands of ordinary people all over the world are using Witchcraft Power right now!

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With these amazing Witchcraft secrets, other people will look up to you—in awe—you'll automatically dazzle others with your power to make things happen at your will, you'll be Master of your destiny, and never have to apologize to anyone for anything!

Whatever you want or need, whatever frustration is bothering you, Witchcraft will help you. It is not evil—nor is it Black Magic. Like electricity, it is simply a power given by nature for the use of men, to make life easier.

You'll see how to get paid without working . . . how to get expensive clothes and furs FREE . . . how to get a first-class plane seat FREE . . . how to vacation at the finest hotels, motels, pools and pleasure palaces, start living like a millionaire as Witches do!

AMAZING TECHNIQUE HAS HELPED THOUSANDS!

Witchcraft secrets like these can make you rich faster than anything else in the world! Here's how others have used them to make miracles happen in their daily lives!

You'll see how Vern, a man who likes to give a lot of expensive parties, was always short of cash until he discovered the amazing WITCH'S MONEY JAR—now all he has to do is dip in, for it brings him an endless flow of cash! Evelyn, a waitress, was always lending money to friends, and was always broke. Finally, she placed her last dollar on the table, and worked the MONEY MAGNET SPELL over it. All at once, dozens of people who had borrowed money from her, rushed to pay her back!

Hank was perpetually broke. One night he got together with some friends, and they decided to cast the MONEY SPELL. The very next day, Hank received in the mail a check for some $250 worth of insurance. (He had never heard of the company that sent the check, he was not insured with them, and had never even made a claim—but he accepted the money.) Another member of the group that used the spell, a 40-year-old secretary, received an automobile as a gift! All the other members of the group received amazing windfalls of money, as well! You'll see how Dexter, a retiree, lives RENT FREE *and* receives $200 a week at the age of 78, with a secret you'll find in this Witch Book! You'll see how Claudine, a secretary, was able to wear the finest, most expensive furs—FREE—and spend weekends at an expensive ski lodge in the mountains, where she met a wonderful man! How Ruth L., a widow—with nothing but a small pension, and a little savings—received her dream house, by using a simple 5-minute ritual on page 38 of this book!

Using the same Witchcraft secrets, YOU can achieve peace of mind and freedom from money worries for the rest of your life!

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- How to Bring Your Perfect Mate to You!
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- Witchcraft Power for Money!
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- Spells for Finding Lost Objects!
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- Raising Your Vital Energy Level!
- How to Keep Evil Forces Away!

YOU CAN HEAL YOURSELF AS WITCHES DO!

Feeling sick today? Plagued by a lot of troublesome illnesses? Perhaps some relative is sick and constantly demanding your attention? Or perhaps it is even a pet that needs help? With the MAGIC POWER OF WITCHCRAFT, you can cure anything, say authors Gavin and Yvonne Frost: "In our experience . . . we have not found a single incurable disease!"

• **ANDY DISSOLVES A GALLSTONE!**—Andy M. developed gallstones. When his illness became too troublesome to ignore, he went to a doctor. Urine tests revealed that he was chronically alkaline. His body was badly out of balance. Using this Witchcraft method to restore balance to the mind and body—in a short while, X-rays showed that he had no more gallstones! Andy never again suffered the excruciating pain of passing stones!

In the same way, say Gavin and Yvonne Frost, almost all illness can be prevented. You are actually employing an ancient Witchcraft method to remove diseased tissue! Even if you do not have any belief in the results, the power will work for you!

One woman, who had been in a wheelchair for 26 years, due to polio and arthritis, used the Witchcraft healing method, and reported that she had no pain and could walk and garden again! A man reported that his son's deep 3rd degree burns miraculously healed overnight!

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• **SECRETS OF SILENT PERSUASION!**—There is a magic handshake that Witches often use, revealed on page 62. With this secret, you can implant a thought in someone's mind! You can use this Witchcraft power to dominate others! Control your boss! Make someone love you! Leave your enemies groveling in the dust! There is even a gazing technique Witches use on page 45, for identical thoughts. With this secret, you can read your friend's mind and share his or her identical thoughts!

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For centuries, these Witchcraft secrets were hushed up, so that those in power could stay in power! Feudal lords kept their bondsmen as slaves. Factory owners kept their employees in dreaded sweatshops, because these masters knew they must not allow their workers to realize that they need not labor their lives away. Witchcraft was suppressed because it works! Not because of any "evil" in it. If it hadn't worked, no one would have worried about it. If you want to gain power, all you need is this amazing Witch Book!

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MEET THE AUTHORS

GAVIN FROST, B.Sc., Ph.D., D.D., is Archbishop of the Church of Wicca, New Bern, North Carolina with national headquarters in Salem, Missouri, branches in several states and worldwide membership. He is Marshal of the Gold Star of England, with the right to wear the Saffron Robe and one of the very few Witches in the Western Hemisphere privileged to wear the authentic mark of initiation on his wrist. Although descended from a long line of mystics and scholars, and formerly a Vice-President and Director of International Operations for major aerospace companies, he prefers to be thought of as a humble teacher.

Mrs. YVONNE FROST, A.A., D.D., with her husband Gavin Frost, devotes her time to giving private instruction and publishing *Survival*, the newsletter of the Church of Wicca, of which she is a Bishop.

Articles by or about Gavin and Yvonne Frost have appeared in such national publications as *Midnight* and the *National Enquirer*.

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ON ASSIGNMENT

BY STEVEN FARHOOD

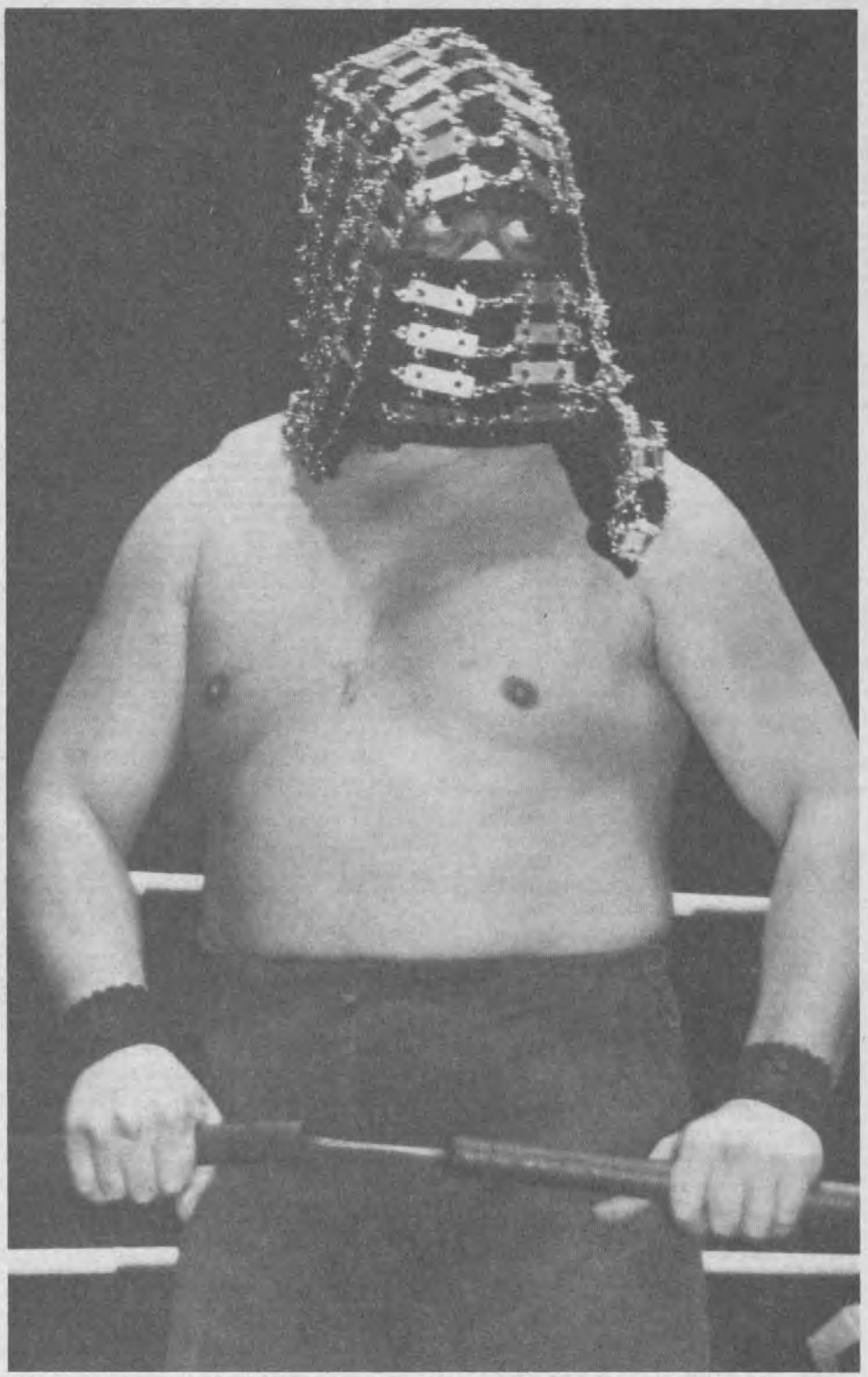
HOTEL IN ATLANTA. Countis checks in and covers for me. My face is distorted and I feel sick. It's my wisdom tooth, you see. If you've ever been there you know what I'm talking about. Pure hell.

Countis goes to the room and I head straight for the bar. Just keep pouring, I tell the 'tender. Nice guy next to me tells me his brother is a dentist. I'm desperate. I'll believe anything. He takes out two little black pills from his pocket and tells me the pain will go away if I take them. I gulp down both pills without thinking twice.

Two hours later Rich carries me into the room. I think I see pink ladies before my eyes, but every time I reach out for them, all I feel is my nose. My glasses are hanging between my elbow and my ribcage. The walls are singing Stevie Wonder songs. I try to dance but I can't stand up. Rich is struggling with me. I escape his grasp and make a head-long dive for the foot of the bed. I don't make it. Now there is blood oozing out of the corner of my mouth. I hear Rich yell a few choice profanities. He sounds like Matt Brock.

Rich calls the promoter and tells him we'll be a little late. We make it to the arena halfway through the second match. Two prelim guys are trading haymakers. My head is still ringing, and I ask Rich why these men are hitting each other. Rich

(Continued on page 58)



This man is not an hallucination. He is The Great Kabuki, and unfortunately he is very much for real.

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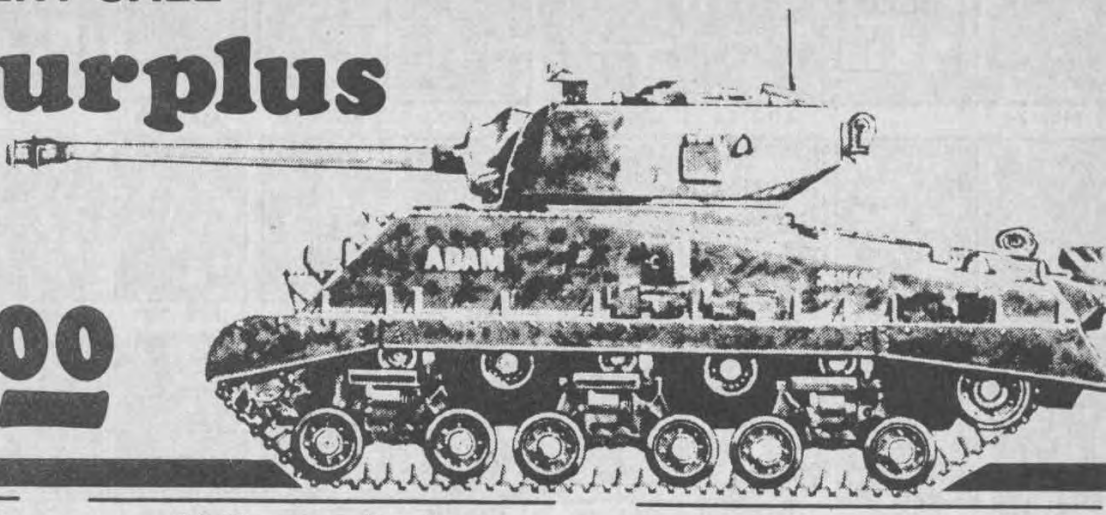

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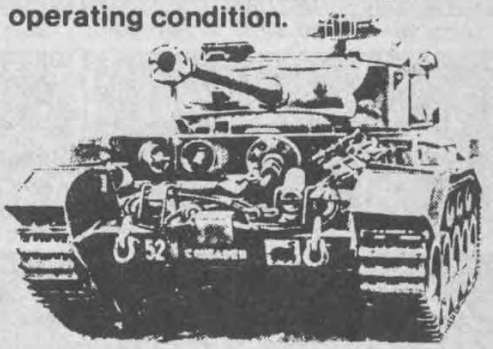

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WRAPS

With CRAIG PETERS

BLACK SHEEP VON ERICH

DAVID VON ERICH

Still the rampage continues. David Von Erich went up against Mike Graham recently and displayed tactics in the ring that up until now would never have been associated with the Von Erich name. Fans in the Florida area remain stunned at the actions of David, and his family, as of press time, has declined to comment further on the activities of what is now being referred to as the "Black Sheep Von Erich." David says that he "doesn't care what anyone says about my wrestling; I'm the holder of the Southern championship belt right now, and my critics aren't, so they can all go squat for all I care."

A PERSONAL LOSS

Sympathies of the entire staff of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* are extended to Mil Mascaras, who recently suffered a close, personal loss. For over 15 years, a husband-and-wife team in Mexico has been making all of Mascaras' masks. We're sad to report that the husband of the team has died. "They are so wonderful," Mil once commented about this couple. "They always come up with good, original ideas for me. I don't like to wear the same mask too often, so their work is very important to me." When Mascaras called our office to inform us of his friends death, he was nearly speechless. "I knew him for over 20 years," Mascaras said, "I will miss him very much. He was a dear friend."

MIL MASCARAS

NO MORE POWER SHORTAGE

IVAN PUTSKI

Congratulations have to go to the "Polish Power," Ivan Putski. In the short time since his return to the WWF, he has regained his superstar status as one of the Federation's premier wrestlers. Facing such opponents as Killer Khan and Greg Valentine, as well as acting as special referee in the Morales-Valentine Inter-continental championship match and the Backlund-Adonis WWF championship match, Putski commands the respect of virtually every WWF fan who has had the pleasure of seeing him in action. "It is good to be back," Putski said, "and I hope to stay here in the WWF for a good long time. I'm glad to see all the fans support me, and I thank them for it."

(Continued on page 62)

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OFF THE TOP ROPE

By Dan Shocket

BEFORE GETTING INTO my brilliant replies to your inane drivel, I want to enlist your aid in helping a man in desperate need of another type of employment. Instead of being WWF champion, it's time we found "Other Employment for Bob Backlund." Send your suggestions as to what job Backlund may be able to handle. Unfortunately, a man can't earn a living doing Howdy Doody imitations, so Backlund must find some other area in which he's competent. Send in suggestions to this column. Sample suggestion: boring insomniacs to sleep.

It was very distressing to hear that a good fan like Gary Romanski was taunted and threatened simply because he rooted against Rick Martel.

Dear Mr. Shocket,

I never liked those inept jerks like Tommy Rich, Tony Garea, and Rick Martel, but now even their fans sicken me.

Recently, in Belleville, New Jersey, Martel wrestled my favorite, Magnificent Muraco. As I cheered Muraco, I was booed, jeered, taunted, and even threatened. But what really sickened me was what occurred to the Magnificent One as he walked back to the dressing room. He was spit upon by a "fan."

These fans think that such upstanding citizens as Larry Zbyszko, Ken Patera, and yourself give wrestling a bad name. They're wrong. It's vile, debased, foulmouthed worm-slime like them that give wrestling a bad name.

GARY ROMANSKI
Lyndhurst, NJ

Dear Mr. Romanski,

I think you said it all. Thank you for sharing your observations with us. I only hope the guilty barbarians recognize themselves and are shamed into behaving in a civilized manner.

Dear Dumbhead Dan,

In the March issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* you have a photo of Bob Backlund punching Killer Khan in the

If Bob Backlund preaches against rulebreaking and then breaks the rules to defend his title, he is nothing more than a slimy hypocrite.

back of the head. Well, what the hell is he supposed to do with an animal like Khan?

Is he supposed to wrestle scientifically with a man who doesn't even know what science means? No! So just shut up and give credit to the champion's champion, Bob Backlund.

DAVID McMENAMIN
Buffalo, NY

Dear Diddlebrain David,

You've inspired another suggestion for "Other Employment for Bob Backlund." The clown has a future selling Amazon swampland to chumps like you.

Dear Mr. Shocket,

If wormslime to you means liking Tommy Rich, we're wormslime and proud of it.

Also, we would like to know what you think of Michael Hayes since The Freebirds broke up. Personally, we think he is a great wrestler.

We know you are entitled to your opinion, but we are entitled to ours, also. So next time you start shoving your opinion at the fans, keep in mind that there are other places you can shove it.

RITA CONN
CHERYL LAFFERTY
Ashland, KY

Dear Ms. Conn and Ms. Lafferty,

Since leaving The Freebirds, Michael Hayes has betrayed his natural abilities to become a fan favorite. Watching him wrestle now, warring against everything he should be, is one of the saddest sights in wrestling.

As to my opinions, I am sure ladies who proudly call themselves wormslime aren't intelligent enough to pass judgment on them anyway.

Dear Dan,

I would like to know your opinion of Ric Flair, the NWA champ. Do you respect Flair for his comments that he'll defend the belt any way he can?

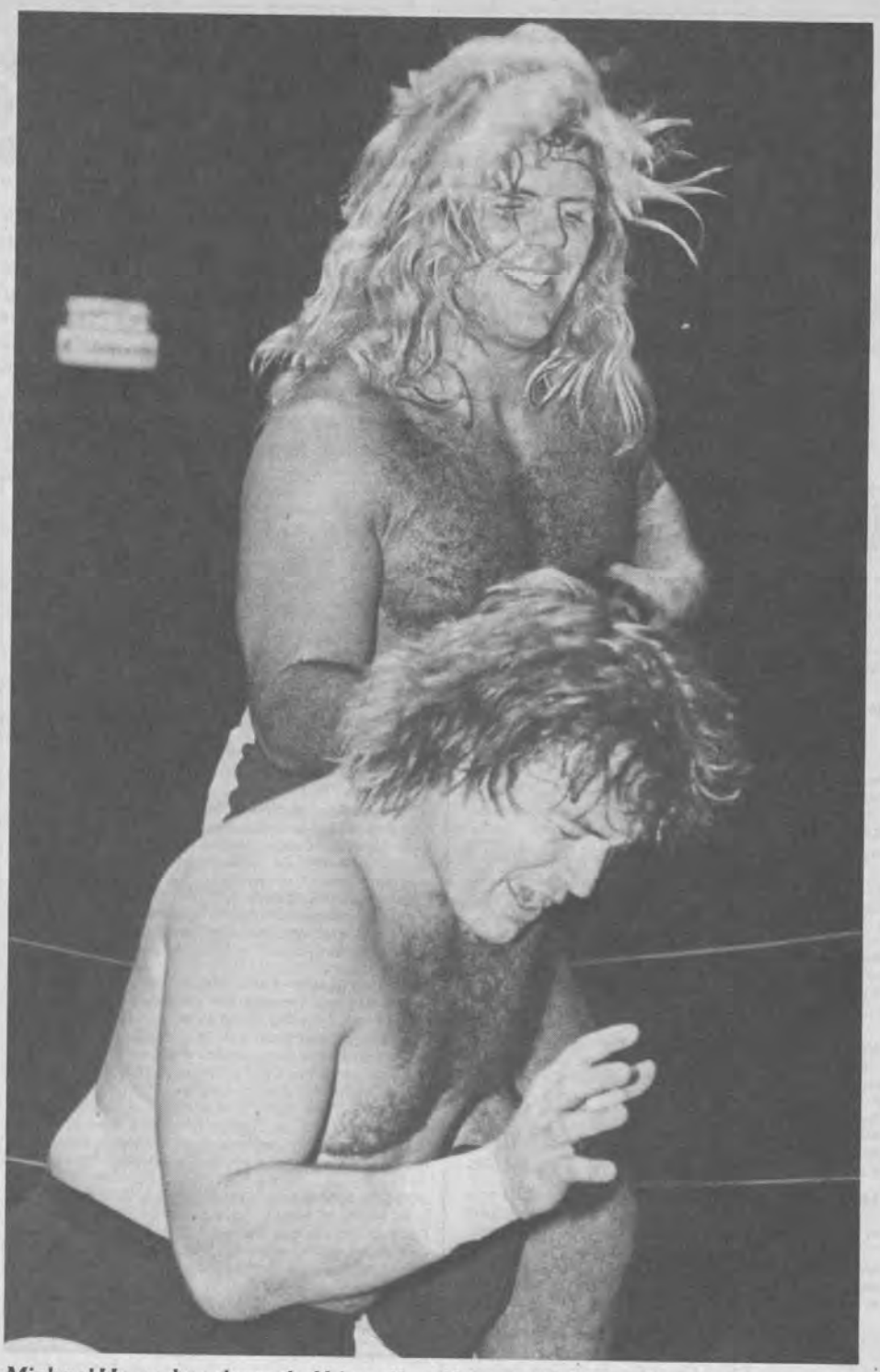
I would also like to add that Greg Valentine is the best.

RUSSEL DEAN
Stratham, NH

Dear Russel,

I'm glad you've given me the opportunity to discuss Flair. In the past, I've been leery of his abilities and commitment to wrestling. I've said he might crumble under the pressure of being champion and go running back to the fans.

I'm still not convinced Flair is as tough as he thinks he is, but he's certainly better than I feared he would be. His championship reign has so far been something all wrestling should admire. □

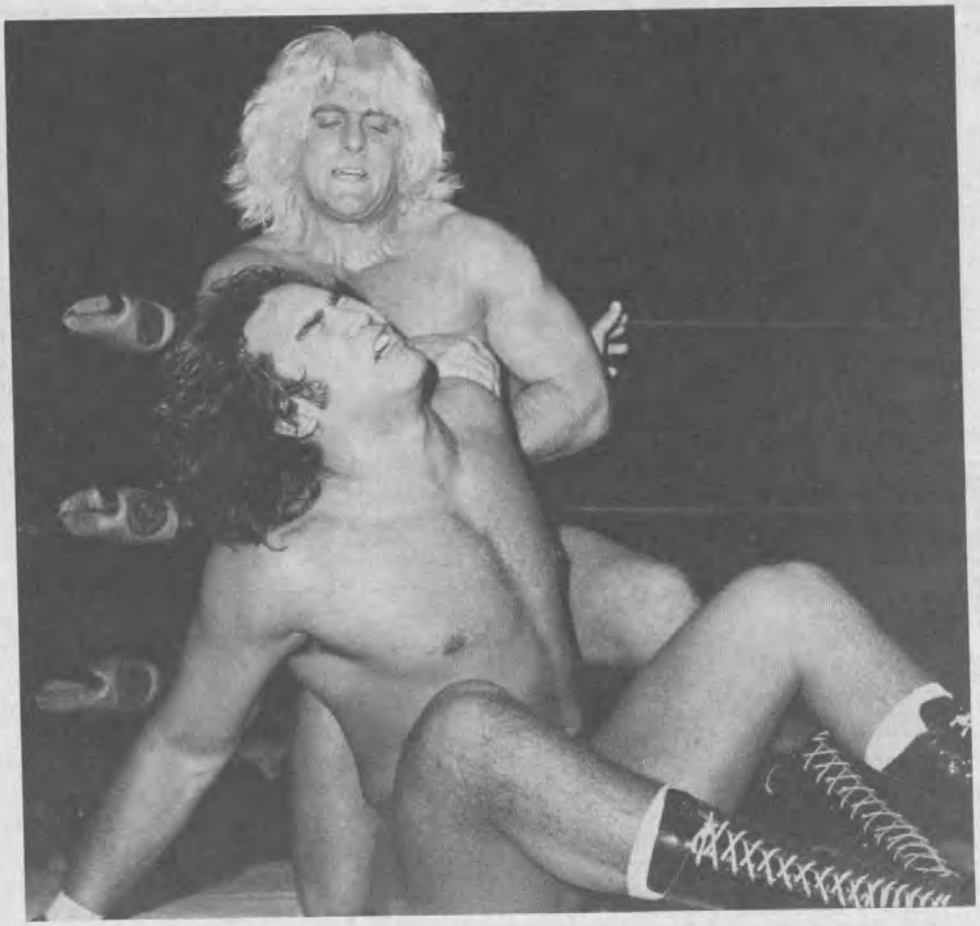


Michael Hayes has degraded himself and his sport by parading as a fan favorite. If he ever wants to make it in wrestling, he should forget about the fans and worry about his own hide.

Every issue, three reporters from PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED will participate in an incisive press conference with a top wrestling star. The questions will be demanding. And the answers will reveal the innermost thoughts of the giants of the sport

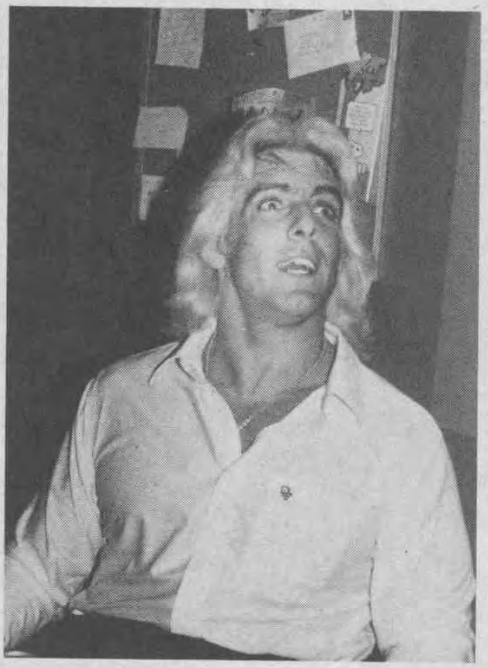
PRESS CONFERENCE

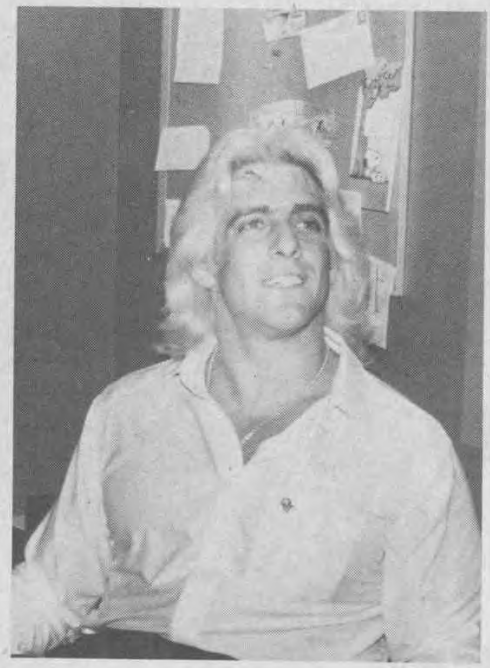
RIC FLAIR

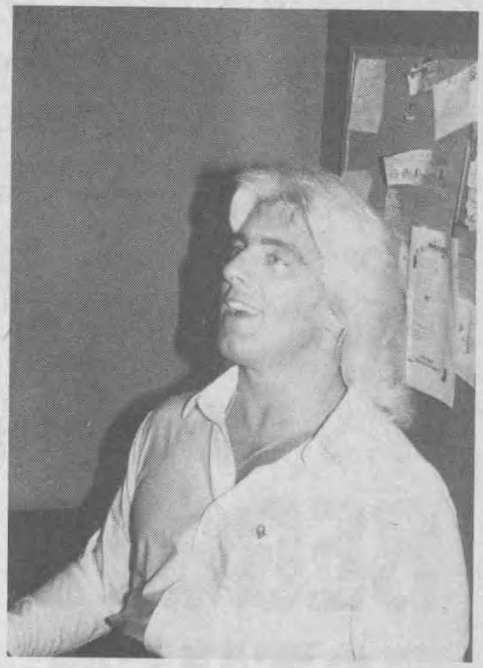


(Ric Flair is the reigning NWA champion. Since winning the title from Dusty Rhodes, Flair has become an extremely aggressive competitor. His energy in the ring and the fury with which he now protects his NWA belt surprises even those observers who have been following Flair for years. Now that fury has affected his friendship with Rick Steamboat. Editors Bill Apter, Craig Peters, and Matt Brock caught up with Flair in Greensboro, North Carolina, recently for this interview.)

"The title means everything to me. If I have to wrestle more aggressively in order to hold on to the championship, I'm going to do just that."







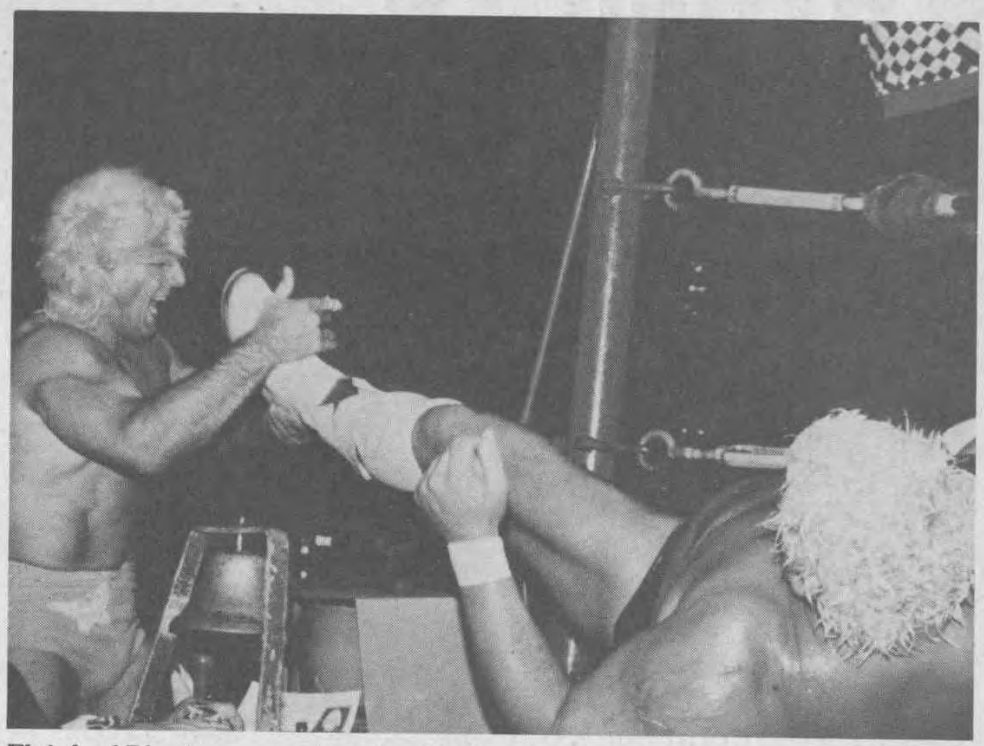
BILL APTER: Things have been going pretty well for you, haven't they Ric? You're on top, you're champion, what else could you ask for?

RIC FLAIR: Not much else, Bill. You're right, things are going well for me. I'm champion, I'm wrestling better than I ever have before in my life, and the only thing I could ask for is to keep on doing exactly what I'm doing right now. I intend to hold on to this championship for a very long time.

MATT BROCK: I've been following your career since you've been a preliminary nobody. You are very aggressive in the ring lately, more so than I've ever seen. Why?

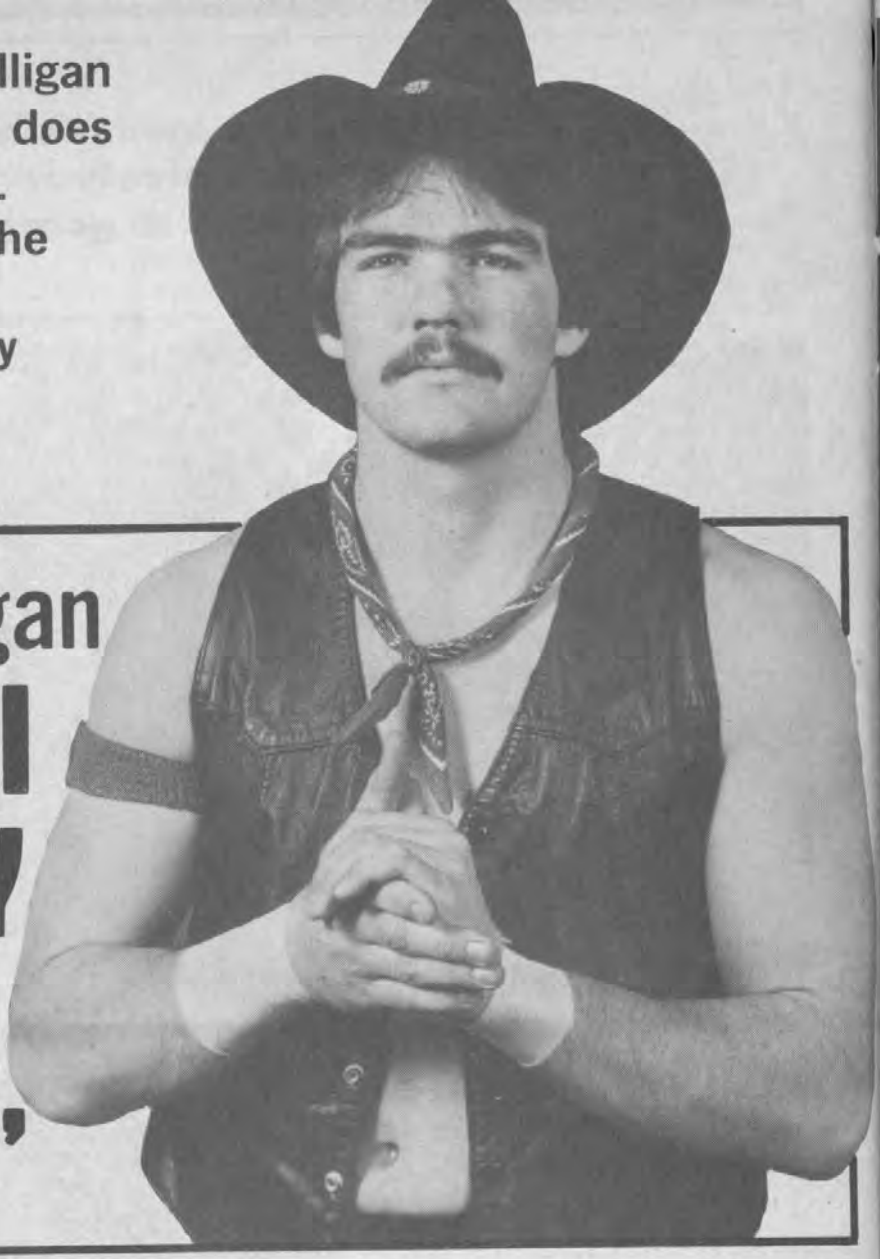
FLAIR: Very simple, Matt. The title means everything to me. If I have to wrestle more aggressively in order to hold on to the championship, I'm going to do just that. I'm on top, now. I'm the champion. And that means that every two-bit punk and every worthy contender is

(Continued on page 64)



Flair had Rhodes scouted perfectly before challenging the American Dream for the NWA title. He knew about Dusty's leg injury and took advantage of it throughout the match.

Life was a living hell in the Mulligan household. Sometimes a man does what fate forces him to do . . . sometimes he just does what he has to do. In his own words, Blackjack Mulligan Jr. tells why he was behind his father's shocking transformation



Blackjack Mulligan Jr.'s Own Story: "I BEGGED MY FATHER TO TURN BAD!"

By Blackjack Mulligan Jr.

IT WAS A Long time coming, you know. Decisions like that aren't made easily, and heaven knows there were a lot of things to think about before and after the fact. Actually, I think it's all for the best, no matter what anyone says. Some people say that's a cop-out, and I guess they're entitled to their own opinions, but nobody's entitled to say that it was a decision that was made lightly.

It didn't happen overnight, either, that's for damn sure. Why, I remember not too long ago, a couple of months it was, when my father went up against Big John Studd. I was at that match, and it damn near ripped out my heart to see Studd do what he did.

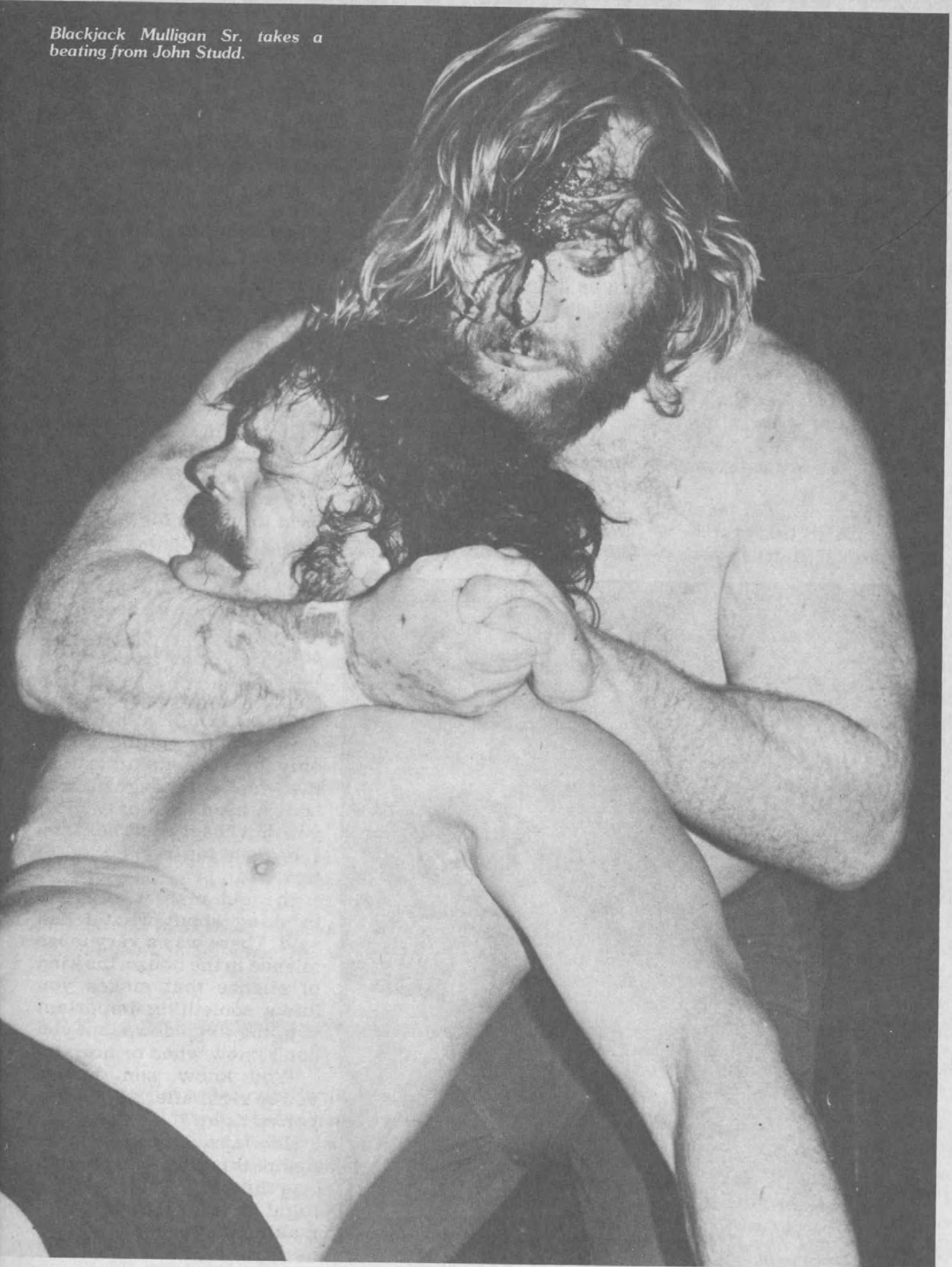
What he did was nearly destroy my old man. I'm telling you, you haven't been through anything until you've seen your own father helpless at the hands of someone else . . . and you're sitting there watching it all and you're totally helpless to do anything.

When we got home that night, it was a scene like nothing that ever happened in our house ever before.

I had gotten home about 15 minutes earlier than my father. He had to shower and change after his match, and he had his own car with him, so I didn't see him at all after his match with Studd.

The house was quiet. Almost too quiet, but I knew that it would change pretty soon.

Fifteen minutes seemed like two hours. I knew what was coming, because it was a scene that had been repeated over and over again. The old man would come in, sore and aching, mean as hell, and



Blackjack Mulligan Sr. takes a beating from John Studd.

PHOTOS BY EDDIE CHESLOCK

complain about whatever match had gone on that night.

More times than I can count, I've seen him sit in his chair totally silent, thinking about the night's match and watching whatever else was inside of him eat away at him like there was no tomorrow. I guess a lot of times he felt like there wasn't, but he always went back into the ring for more.

After this Studd match, though, it was something else altogether. When the slam of the front door destroyed the silence of the house, I was ready for the worst. I wasn't ready, though, for what happened next.

"Damn it all, I'm fed up to *here* with all this crap!"

Steamed? Man, I never saw anything get under the old man's skin like that match with Studd. He threw his gym bag into the corner and knocked over a lamp, breaking the bulb and the porcelain body. Cursing his aim, he stormed into the kitchen, opened the refrigerator, cursed again, and slammed the door shut.

I didn't say a word. He came into the living room and sat in his favorite chair. He couldn't sit still, though, and in about a half a minute he was up and pacing the floor.

"Damn life this is . . . I'm getting fed up." He cursed under his breath again and looked directly into my eyes. I could almost feel the anger with my own eyes as he spoke.

Perhaps it is time for Blackjack Mulligan Sr. to return to his former, more aggressive, style. At least that's what Blackjack's son thinks. Mulligan sends Studd reeling (above).

"There was a time a while ago when I was doing all of this because of you," he said to me. "I wanted to set an example. I knew that rulebreaking was a decision that has to be made on a man's own conscience, and I didn't want you following me as a rulebreaker just because that's the way your father wrestles.

"Damn it son, I'm sick of taking all this crap," he said. "If I could only cut loose a little bit, I'd be able to take care of them all. It's the most damnable frustrating thing in my life."

I told him to do it. "Don't worry about me," I told him. "You've got to wrestle the way you want—the way you used to, if just for your own sanity. Damn it, Dad, do what you've got to do! Hell, if you don't think I'm old enough to make my own decisions, then you're really in a helluva jam. Do it, and go all the way. You can't keep banging your head into a wall like this!"

Sometimes yelling is the only form of communication that sinks through somebody's head. Not only did I yell, but I begged, so help me, I begged for my father to turn bad.

The old man was silent, thinking about what I had said. There was a very tense silence in the house, the kind of silence that makes you know something important is going to go down, but you don't know when or how.

"You know, son, maybe you're right after all, maybe you're right."

He lapsed into silence again, thinking . . . thinking . . . thinking. Long into the night he just sat there, quiet, making the decision he knew he must. □

WHAT THEY ARE SAYING

Every month, our reporters will compile wrestlers' most revealing quotes. Often catching the grapplers with their guards down, our reporters will work endlessly in obtaining interesting quotes on a variety of subjects

VERNE GAGNE

"It's very satisfying to see my son Greg doing as well as he is doing. He is developing into a fine wrestler, and a fine, respectable young man. When I teach wrestling in my training camp, I am tough, but I think I put extra pressure on Greg to perform well. I must say, he's been wrestling superlatively."

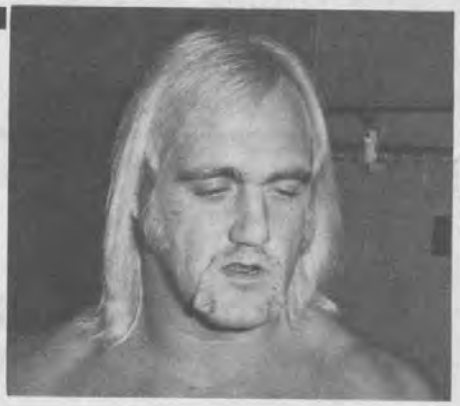
CAPTAIN LOU ALBANO

"Everybody doubts the genuine genius of the Captain, babies, but let me tell you one thing and one thing for sure, and that's the fact that before you know it, I'm gonna be running the WWF, and not only as leader of the tag team champs, but as leader of Jimmy Snuka, heavyweight champ, too!"

KILLER KHAN

(Through an interpreter) "You people call me sadist, say I am to not be allowed in ring with your pretty boy wrestlers. I say right now that anybody, if it's ugly Ivan Putski, stupid Tony Atlas, or that freak of all freaks Andre the Giant, I say that they are going to get what they deserve from me."

HULK HOGAN



"Great. Now I'm at the negotiating stages. I think Nick the Sick Bockwinkel is trying to avoid me, trying to keep me tied up in negotiations forever because he knows that once he steps into the ring with the Incredible me, his precious AWA championship is as good as gone. No chance, Bockwinkel. We'll meet someday."

(Continued on page 49)

A FAN'S GUIDE TO THE NWA TAG TEAM TOURNAMENT

THE NWA TAG team belts are up for grabs, and everybody wants a piece of the action.

No wonder: major cities around the world will be holding elimination rounds, and the winning team in each city splits $25,000. Teams are not limited to competing in only one city, and the vast number of tag teams already entered into the competition is staggering.

OLE ANDERSON VS. PAT PATTERSON

Champions from the individual cities will advance to regional contests, and then to East and West divisional tournaments.

In the final round, East meets West for the grand prize: the NWA tag team championship belts.

NWA President Jim Crockett ordered the tournament after stripping Gene and Ole Anderson of the belts. The tournament is unique in the annals of professional wrestling, and *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* will be there every step of the way to keep you abreast of all the action through the final round and the crowning of the new NWA tag team champions.

GENE ANDERSON, OLE ANDERSON, & STAN HANSEN

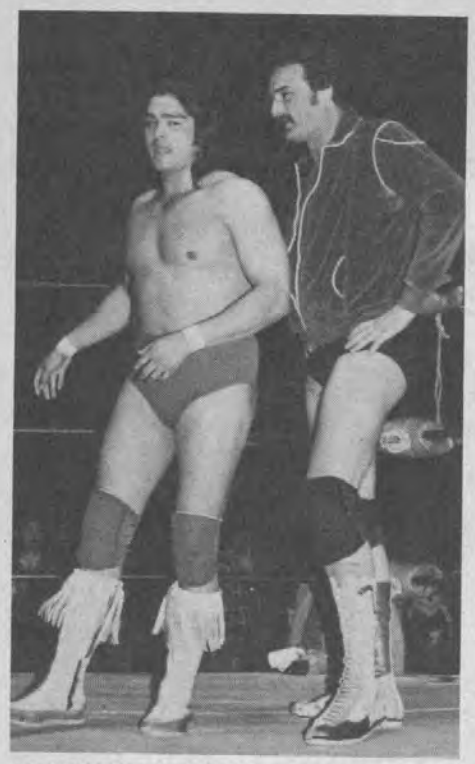
Two rounds have already been held: in Greensboro and Charlotte, both in North Carolina.

PAT PATTERSON VS. MR. FUJI

First round action in Greensboro saw Tim Horner and Terry Taylor drop the first match to Adrian Adonis and Jesse

GREG VALENTINE VS. BLACKJACK MULLIGAN SR.

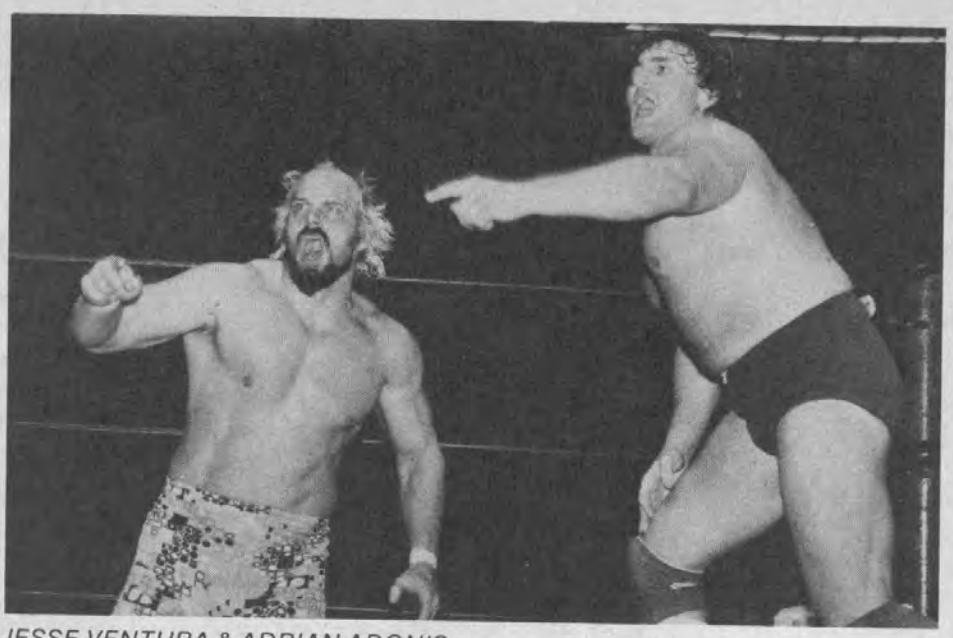
At stake is the NWA tag team championship. There is a $25,000 prize in each preliminary round, and teams are assembling from around the world to participate. It's a grueling road to the title, but for the eventual champions it will be well worth it



JAY YOUNGBLOOD & JAKE ROBERTS

JIMMY VALIANT & JOHNNY WEAVER

Ventura. Ray Stevens and Pat Patterson beat Mr. Fuji and Mr. Saito, and Johnny Weaver and Jimmy Valiant beat Ivan Koloff and Austin Idol due to disqualification. Ole Anderson and Stan Hansen (with Gene Anderson advising) eliminated Jake Roberts and Jay Youngblood. Stevens and Patterson beat Adonis and Ventura to move to the final match of the evening against Anderson and Hansen who won against Weaver and Valiant. In that final match, it appeared as if Anderson and Hansen won the $25,000 prize, but the referee declared the award to be held up due to interference on

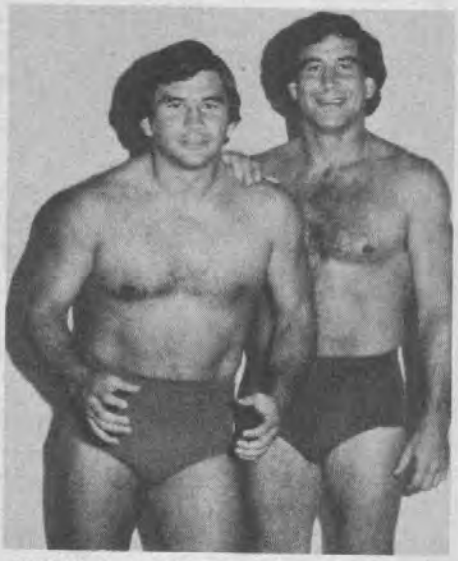


JESSE VENTURA & ADRIAN ADONIS

the part of Gene Anderson. An investigation is pending, and we will report the result to you as soon as possible.

Second round action in Charlotte saw Hansen and Anderson victorious over Youngblood and Roberts; Greg Valentine and Roddy Piper won by disqualification against Blackjack Mulligan Jr. and Sr.; Jack and Jerry Brisco beat Sgt. Slaughter and his protege, Private Nelson. Pat Patterson hurt his knee as he helped partner Ray Stevens beat Idol and Koloff. Anderson and Hansen were disqualified in their match against Patterson and Stevens, but Patterson could not continue due to the knee injury

PAT PATTERSON & RAY STEVENS



JERRY & JACK BRISCO

sustained earlier, and that team dropped out of the evening's competition as well. The final match saw Jack and Jerry Brisco collect $25,000 as they downed Valentine and Piper.

Once the investigation in Greensboro is complete, either Anderson and Hansen or Patterson and Stevens will join the Briscos and a host of other superstar teams in the regional finals. Perhaps one of them will be the next NWA champions, or perhaps a team yet to qualify will wear the belt.

Stick with *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* for the latest news and updates on the NWA tag team tournament. □

ADONIS & VENTURA

HOW BLASSE
PUNCH WILL

Fred Blassie is preparing to gain control of the WWF, and he'll be using Adrian Adonis and Jesse Ventura as his first wave of attack. Blassie has never managed a world singles champion, but his determination along with Adonis and Ventura's raw power may well place Bob Backlund's title in jeopardy

'S ONE-TWO TOPPLE BACKLUND

Fred Blassie (inset, opposite page) has worked out a plan that would bring either Adrian Adonis or Jesse Ventura (opposite page) the WWF title. Adonis locks up Backlund (above).

PHOTOS BY BILL APTER & STU SAKS

DESPITE HIS REPUTATION as one of wrestling's premier managers, Fred Blassie has never made it to the top. Since the formation of the WWF back in the early '60s, not a single heavyweight champion has been managed by the self-proclaimed fashion plate of wrestling.

Nineteen eighty-two could be the turnaround year for Blassie.

"That's right, all you pencil-necked geeks, this is the year of the champion for Classy Fred Blassie," said the colorful manager.

It very well may be. Two recent additions to the Blassie stable have risen to top spots of contention, and it could be Bob Backlund's championship that hangs in the balance.

First there is Adrian Adonis. Street-smart, tough, willing to go all the way in any sort of a scrap, Adonis has proven that he can take punishment as well as administer it.

"I'm ready, Backlund, I'm there and I'm ready to do battle anytime

you want," said Adonis. "I'm one of *the* major threats to your title, I'm a top contender, and it's a spot in wrestling that I've earned. I've taken a lot of lumps getting here, but I'm going to pay them all back until your baby face is scarred, bloodied, and your championship belt, which you did not earn, is around my waist."

Blassie is like a proud father when he speaks about Adrian Adonis.

"My boy Adrian is going to go all the way someday," said Blassie.

Jesse Ventura saps Backlund's strength with a bone-crushing bear-hug (left) and lowers the champion to his knees in a test of strength (above). According to Blassie's plan, Ventura is setting Backlund up for his next match with Adonis.

"He's a screaming house of fire in the ring, and once he gets Backlund into the sleeperhold of his, it's going to be goodnight, Irene. That'll be it for four years of Backlund, the most boring champeen the WWF has ever seen."

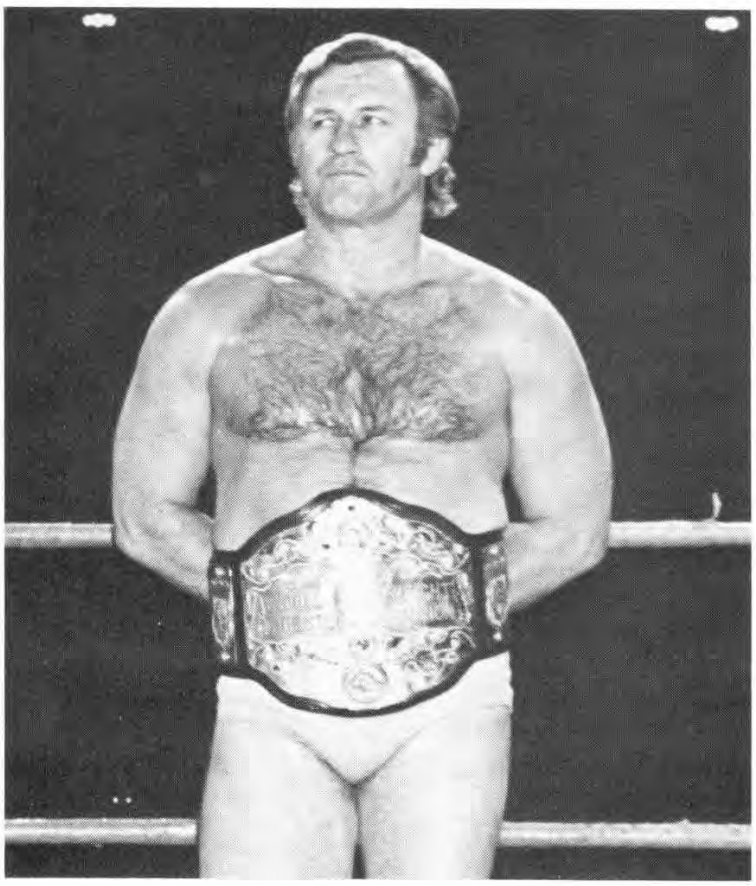
Then there is Jesse "The Body" Ventura. Along with Adonis, Ventura was one half of a championship tag team in the AWA. Now Ventura has joined his partner under the tutelage of manager Blassie. In tag team competition, the two are an

(Continued on page 66)

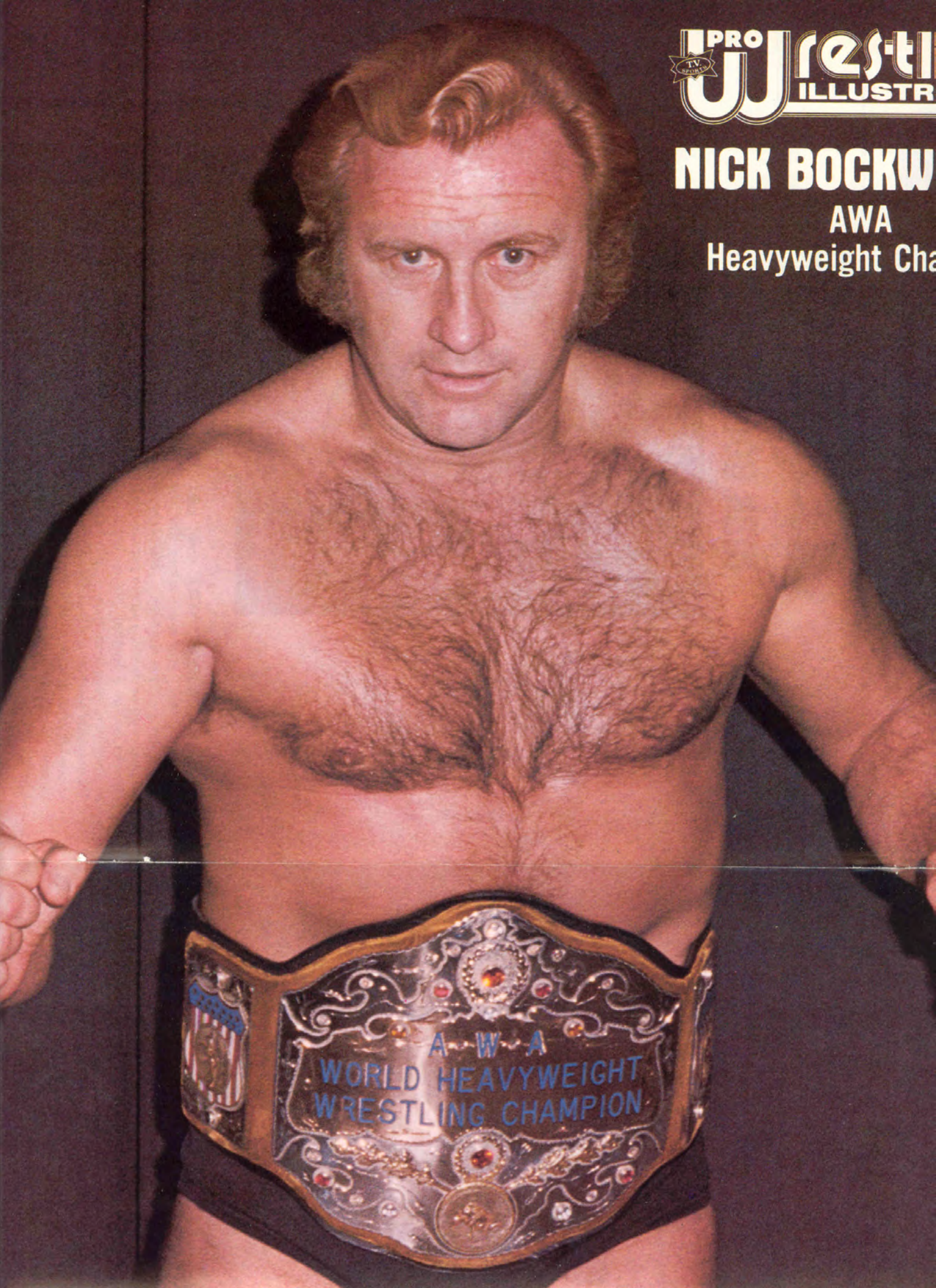
PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED
T.V. SPORTS

CLOSE-UP

NICK BOCKWINKEL



EVEN THOUGH YOU may hate Nick Bockwinkel, you must admit that the AWA champion is a great wrestler . . . He began wrestling 28 years ago while still a student at UCLA . . . Nick wanted to be a football player but a leg injury steered him away from that . . . His father Warren Bockwinkel worked endless hours training Nick to make him the grappler he is today . . . Early in his career he held the Pacific Coast title and the Georgia championship . . . He has been nicknamed "The Lean Mean Machine" . . . Together with Ray Stevens, they held the AWA tag team title longer than any team in history . . . Nick is managed by Bobby "The Brain" Heenan . . . He credits Heenan's ingenuity with helping him win the AWA title from Verne Gagne . . . Calling the competition in the AWA "garbage," Bockwinkel often goes out of AWA areas and defends the belt there . . . At times he can wrestle scientifically, and that is when wrestling experts agree that he is the best . . . Recent tours have seen him defend the belt in West Germany, Japan, and Australia . . . When he is not wrestling, Nick Bockwinkel enjoys snowmobiling and horseback riding . . . He considers himself to be wrestling's most intelligent human being . . . Plans to retire the AWA belt within the next year if competition is "as boring as it is now."


PRO
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WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT
WRESTLING CHAMPION

Pro Wrestling Illustrated
TV Sports

CLOSE-UP

GREATEST MATCH

"Without hesitation, my greatest match was on November 8, 1975 in St. Paul, Minnesota. That's the night I trounced old man Gagne for the AWA heavyweight title. I'll never forget the sound of the crowd in the arena, or the feeling of finally buckling that strap around my waist."

FAVORITE MANEUVER

"It's getting very popular these days, and I suppose I'm not being overly original, but I must say that the figure-four leglock is my favorite maneuver. I love to put it on wimps like Rick Steamboat or Hulk Hogan and watch them squirm like helpless insects."

MOST HATED OPPONENT

"That excuse of a scum of a wrestler Greg Gagne. It's tough, you know, but I think he may actually be worse than his old man. I can't wait until the day that Gagne is eradicated from wrestling forever, and I hope that I'm the man to do the job. I'm surely going to try my damndest, that's for sure."

TOUGHEST OPPONENT

"As much as I hate to admit it, I believe my toughest opponent has been Billy Robinson. He's a man who knows how to wrestle well, and anyone who's going to step into the ring with him had better be prepared to be put to the test. Of course I win all my matches with him, but he's still a tough customer."

PATERA & DUNCUM

THE TAG TEAM THAT HAS EVERYTHING

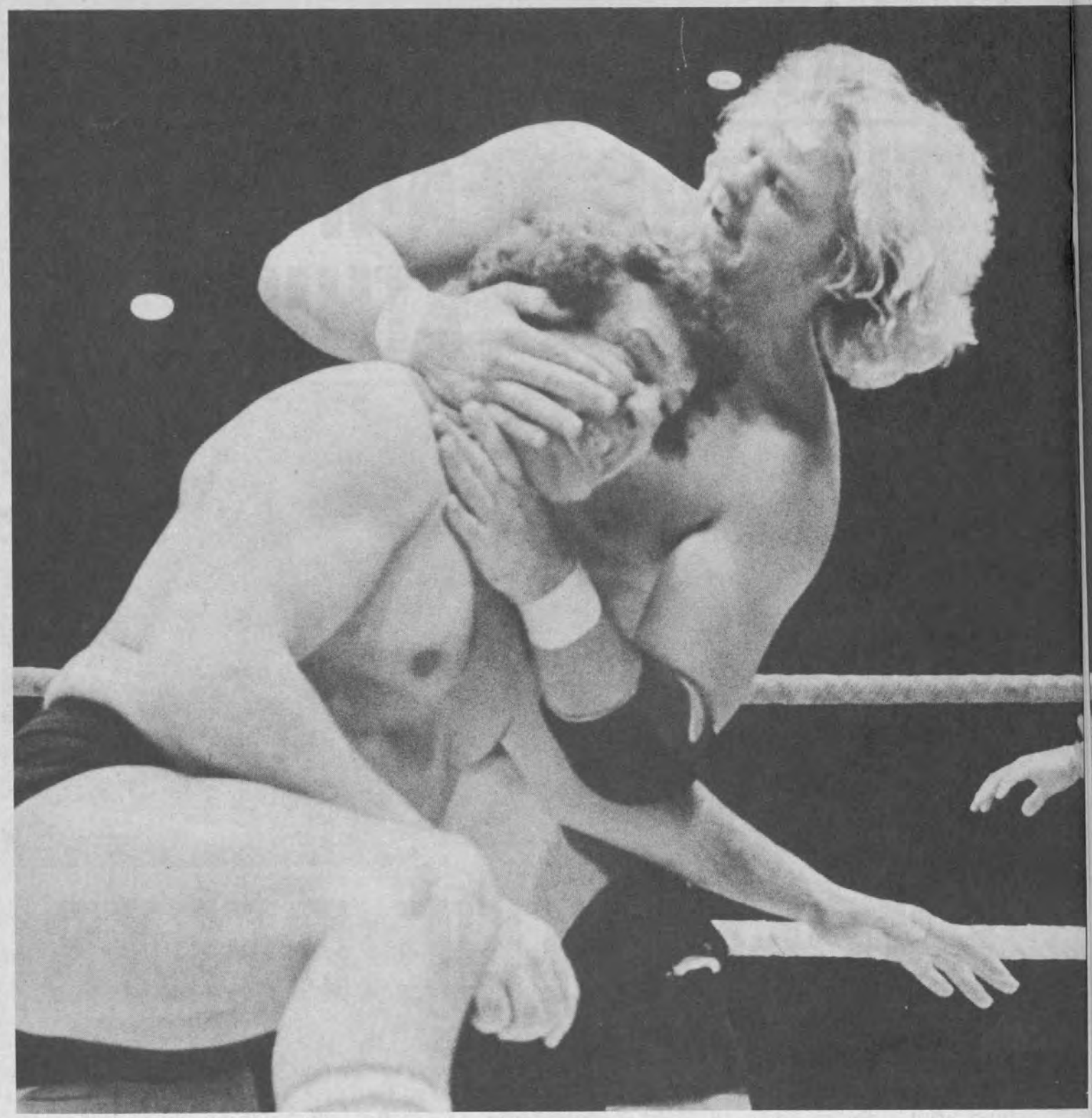
EXCEPT THE BELTS

THEY SEEM TO be a tag team blessed by Satan. They have every advantage any rulebreaker could want. They've got it all, except the AWA tag team title.

On paper, they appear as unbeatable as the plague. First, there's Ken Patera, perhaps the strongest, most ruthless man in wrestling. His partner is Bobby Duncum, a reckless wildman who is considered one of the most dangerous men in professional sports. Both men are notorious for being brutal tag team partners.

As if this wasn't enough, the pair is managed by Bobby Heenan. This is the man many consider wrestling's evil genius. He has guided Nick Bockwinkel to great success as the AWA champion. His strategies for tag teams are considered the most

Talent, ability, experience. Ken Patera and Bobby Duncum have it all. Together, they form one of the most powerful and exciting tag teams anywhere. The only thing they lack are the championship belts, but that's a situation they say will change very soon



brutally effective in history.

Greg Gagne, who holds the AWA tag team title with Jim Brunzell, has said about this combination, "Have you ever seen a walking nightmare? I have."

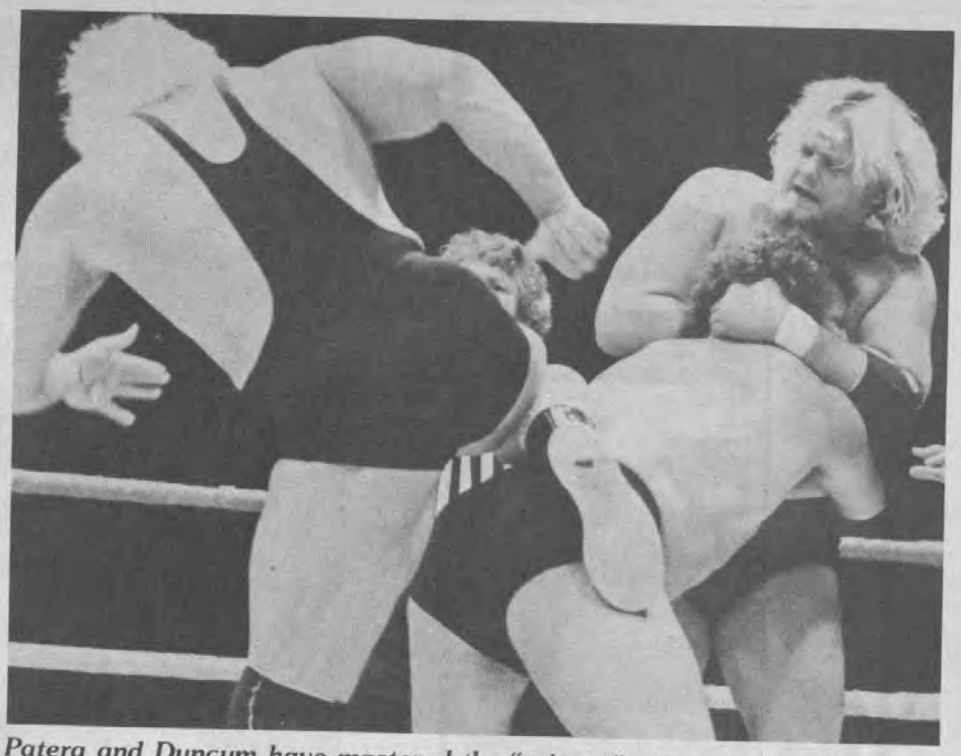
When the team first entered the AWA, people assumed and feared it would be a short time before they would become champions. Yet that hasn't happened. Is it a miracle victory of good over evil? Or is there a logical explanation for it?

Actually, there are several logical explanations. First, Patera and Duncum were overconfident they would be champions in short order. Knowing their natural abilities, they never thought they'd have to work for the belts. It came as a shock to them that their opponents wouldn't just fall to their knees and beg for mercy. Duncum and Patera overestimated themselves and underestimated the opposition.

Neither Duncum nor Patera was ready for something like this. These guys don't like to be frustrated. They quickly looked around for someone to blame. As might be expected, they started blaming each other and

Heenan. That was okay with Heenan, as *he* blamed them. Meetings of the team got very ugly very quickly.

Second, nobody counted on their opponents rising to the occasion. Tag teams wrestle at their best against Duncum and Patera. Billy Robinson and Baron Von Raschke agreed that they never wrestled better than they did against Duncum and Patera.



Patera and Duncum have mastered the "science" of tag team rulebreaking under the guidance of manager Bobby Heenan. Veteran Billy Robinson is the unfortunate victim of their vicious tactics.

"We never worked so hard in our lives," Robinson recalls. "We prepared for this match as if it was the most important ever. In a way, it was. You get sloppy against either Patera or Duncum and your career could be over. When your opponents play for keeps, so must you. I've never been more prepared for a match in my life.

"You know something strange? They weren't as tough as I thought they'd be. Even taking into consideration how we were so well prepared, they weren't that tough. They're missing something; I wish I could put my finger on it. All I know is that they should be tougher than they are.

"I think they know that, too. I've seen them in later matches. They're getting rougher. They're beginning to take themselves more seriously. The tag team is beginning to jell, beginning to approach what it can become. If Heenan can light a fire under them, no one will be safe."

Can Heenan light a fire under them? No one knows. Even Heenan, usually ready to brag at

a moment's notice, is strangely quiet. He seems to be as angry as anyone over his team's failure to be immediate champions and he's determined to do something about it. However, it seems he doesn't know what to do.

Duncum and Patera aren't talking about it, either. Heenan has ordered them to avoid the press. There will be no comments until Heenan removes the gag order. He doesn't want any quarrels to be displayed in public.

His team's failure is enough public trouble for him. □

APRIL 1982 VOLUME III, No. 7

WRESTLING ENQUIRER

FLAIR TURNS ON FRIENDS

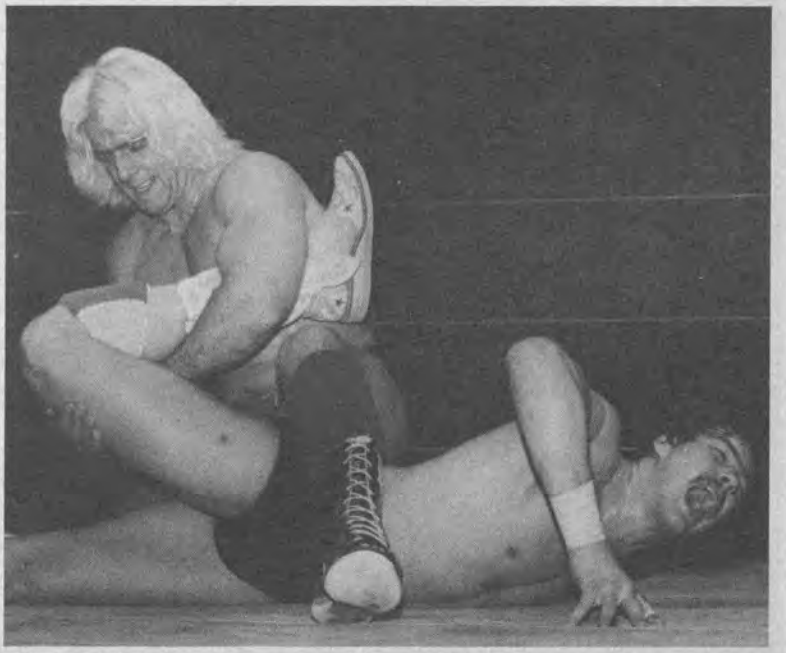
Vows To Keep Belt At All Costs

BY PETER KING

ROANOKE, VA—"I don't care what I have to do to keep my title," Ric Flair declared after his ugly brawl against former friend Blackjack Mulligan Jr.

"He can wrestle any way he wants," Flair continued, "but that doesn't mean anything to me. I'm the NWA champion. As long as I walk out of the ring with my belt, I'm satisfied."

Blackjack Mulligan Jr. was too upset to talk to reporters. He had been promised a scientific match by Flair and suffered through a savage battle.



NWA champion Ric Flair applies pressure to a figure-four legbar as Blackjack Mulligan Jr. screams in pain. Vowing to do whatever is necessary to retain his title, Flair combined legal maneuvers with rulebreaking tactics in turning back Mulligan Jr.'s challenge.

Shock Ending To Patera-Hogan Bout

An hour after his match against Ken Patera, Hulk Hogan is still angry and bitter.

BY STEVE FARHOOD

MINNEAPOLIS, MN—Two of wrestling's most bitter enemies, Hulk Hogan and Ken Patera, met in the ring and sent shock waves throughout the AWA.

The wild and tempestuous battle ended with fan favorite Hogan being disqualified. It's the first time in a long time Patera had benefited from a disqualification.

"I went crazy," Hogan said later. "There's no excuse for being that stupid. I gave that rat the match. I want another chance soon!"

Florida Fans Target Hussein Arab

BY STU SAKS

TAMPA, FL—Fans from all over the state are signing petitions to bar Hussein "Iron Sheik" Arab from wrestling here.

Florida fans have started a petition seeking the ouster of Hussein Arab from Sunshine State rings.

"He's a disgrace to the sport," said Larry McLain, a longtime fan who is spearheading the drive. "It's our duty to do all we can to drive him out of the NWA."

Ray Stevens Speaks Out

Ray Stevens will lend his voice to Mid-Atlantic wrestling.

BY RICH COUNTIS

CHARLOTTESVILLE, NC—Fans of Mid-Atlantic wrestling are hearing a new voice analyzing the television wrestling show. The voice belongs to Ray Stevens.

"It's something I've always wanted to do," he said, "and it is a way to get paid for doing something I do anyway—analyze other wrestlers. When I wrestle now, I find I'm even better!"

Dream Comes True For Sweet Brown Sugar

BY BILL APTER

TOKYO, JAPAN—For his entire wrestling career, Sweet Brown Sugar has idolized Mil Mascaras. Finally, he got the chance to test himself against his idol.

Sweet Brown Sugar eyes idol and opponent Mil Mascaras seconds before their stunning scientific encounter.

"It was the greatest match of my life," Sugar said afterwards. "Pitting my skills against this genius was a thrilling experience. I can't wait to do it again!"

AROUND THE GLOBE

NEW YORK, NY

Ivan Putski, hired as a special referee for the Bob Backlund vs. Adrian Adonis Texas Death Match and for the Pedro Morales vs. Greg Valentine Brass Knuckles bout, could be in trouble. Adonis and Valentine both say Putski's biased officiating enabled Backlund and Morales to emerge victorious.

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

"Hangman" Bobby Jaggers won Puerto Rico's North American title in a three-day tournament. Jaggers has already signed to defend the title against the popular Invader and Carlos Colon.

HONOLULU, HI

Magnificent Muraco gave WWF champion Bob Backlund some anxious moments but was not able to take the crown from the WWF champion. "Even here, in my hometown, Backlund pays off everyone so he can't lose the belt," Muraco accused.

MONTREAL, QUEBEC

Dino Bravo's feud against the hated Sailor White came to a head as the two engaged in a bloody brawl at the Paul Sauve Arena. White, who needed 12 stitches to close a wound on his forehead, says he will not give up until Bravo is shamed out of Canada.

LOOKING AT...

Matt Brock:

FIJI ISLANDS, HUH? Man, they've got to be kidding. Let's see, time to dust off the ol' atlas. Fiji, Fiji . . . oh, *there* it is, about 1,500 miles off the coast of New Guinea, about 1,000 miles north of New Zealand. So that's where Jimmy Snuka's from, is it?

Frankly, I wouldn't bet on it. There are a lot of people who claim that Snuka is an Australian aborigine who was exiled from Queensland and set out to sea on a raft. Rumor has it that the raft beached on Fiji and after a few years, some sharklike promoter brought Snuka to the States.

I'm not one for rumors. Never have been. One thing I do know is that Snuka is a class-A, absolute and unequivocal, totally certifiable lunatic.

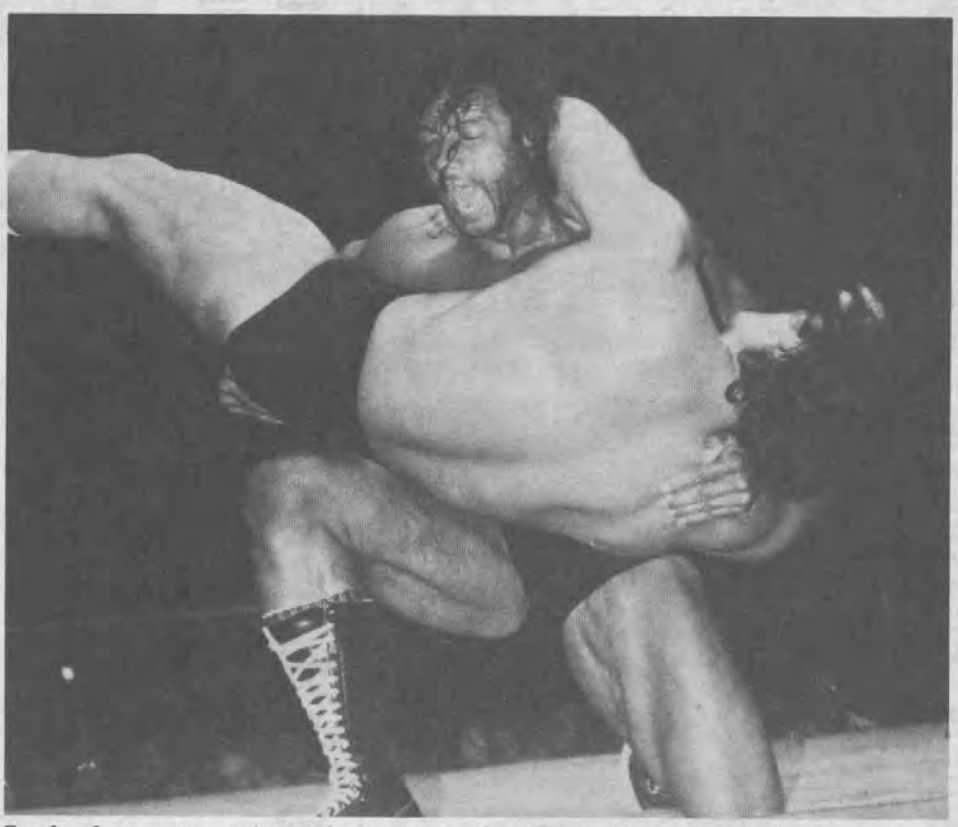
The strangest thing about this particular lunatic is that he has a modicum of talent. Not that he's a Brisco, mind you, but Snuka is kind of a cross between Mil Mascaras and George Steele: you can admire the ability that's there, but if he's coming after you, my advice is to run like hell.

As for the ability side of Snuka, just take a look at his flying bodypress. If I didn't know better, I'd say that Mascaras has a hell of a head of hair under that mask of his. But I know better.

As for the crazy side of Snuka, consider the fact that he's being managed by the master of craziness, Captain Lou Albano. Captain Lou could give crazy lessons to a bedbug.

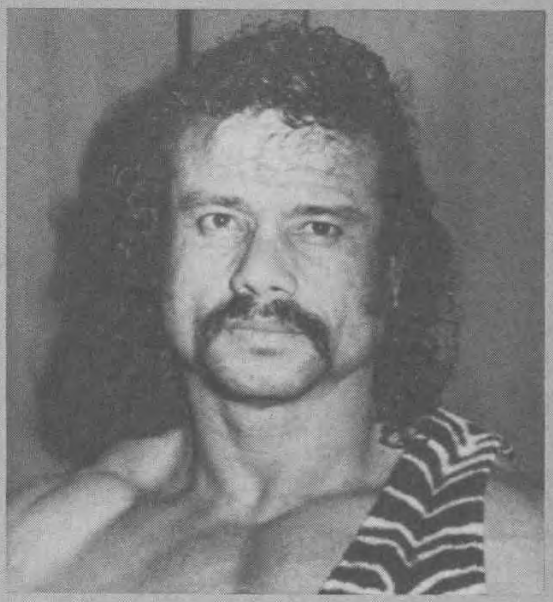
Let's back up a little bit. It wasn't too long ago when Snuka was in Georgia. You don't have to be an oldtimer like myself to remember when he held the tag team belts along with one of the former Freebirds himself, Terry Gordy.

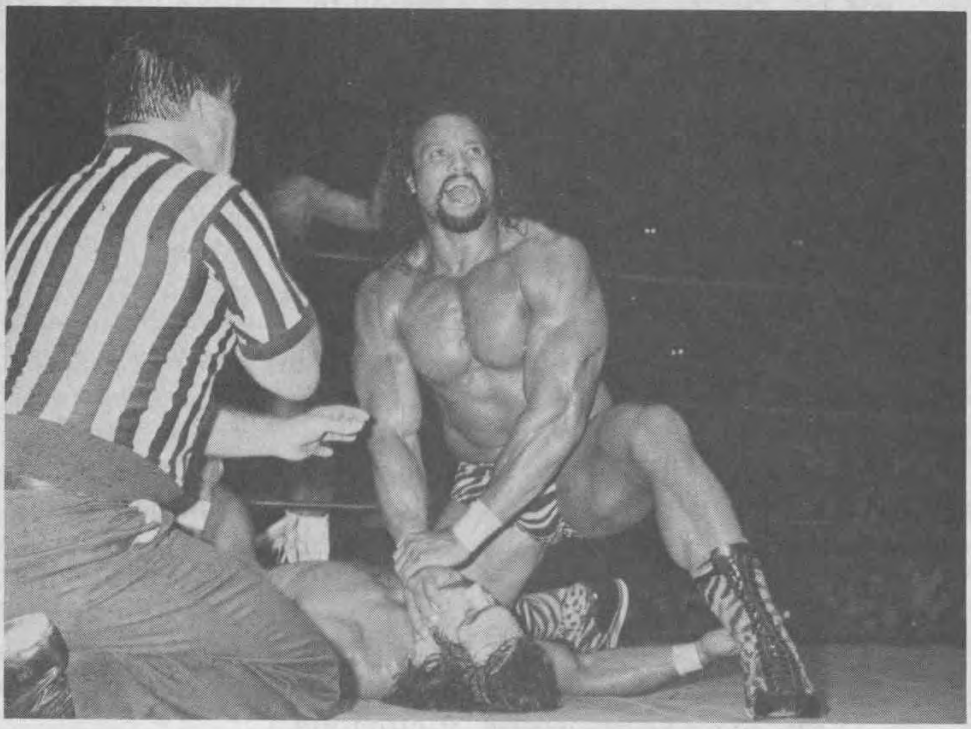
Some people claim that it was



Snuka lets out a primeval scream as he drives his opponent's spine across his knee.

JIMMY SNUKA





Before coming to the WWF, Snuka was involved in a violent feud with Rick Steamboat in the Mid-Atlantic. Snuka applies a chokehold (above) and cocks his right fist (above right).

the influence of Snuka that finally broke up The Freebirds. Crazy? Maybe, but the story goes that Snuka and Gordy became such close friends in their capacity as tag team partners, that a wedge was driven between Gordy and the rest of the birds. Once the friction started, it was only a matter of time before the inevitable breakup.

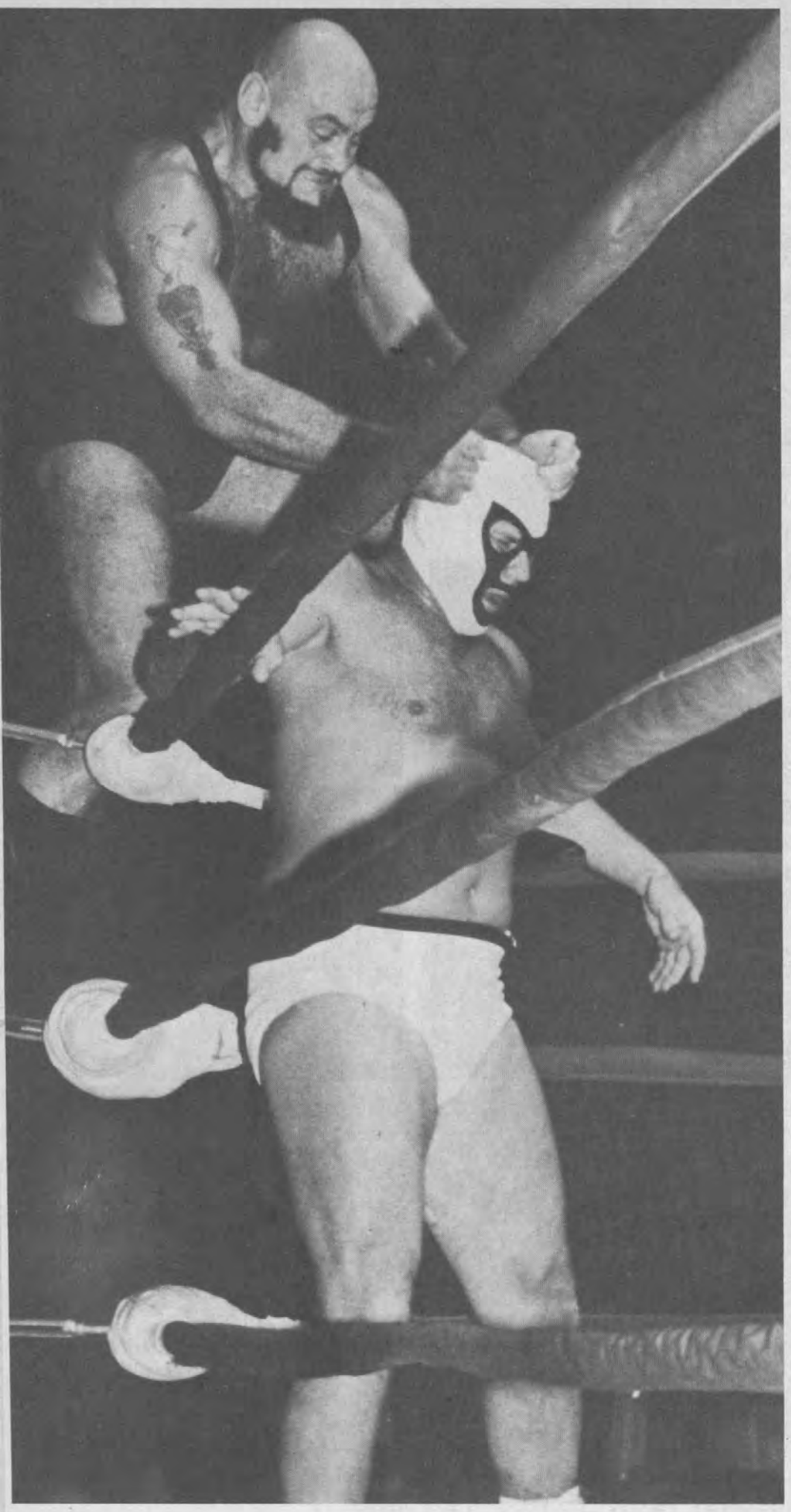
Then again, these are probably the same people who claim that Snuka is from Australia.

Anyway, after a stint in Georgia, Snuka came to the attention of Albano who just happened to be looking for someone to break up the boredom (such as it is) of managing tag teams.

Molded much in the same way as former Albano proteges such as The Samoans or The Moondogs, Snuka is a madman. But just as Albano seems to be leaning towards ability rather than insanity lately (witness the combination of skill and talent evident in Mr. Fuji and Mr. Saito), Snuka is a madman with talent.

There, I've said it twice already: Snuka has talent. What he will do with this talent remains to be seen, and I really don't think he has the moxie to go all the way and dethrone Backlund.

Stylistically, though, he could be trouble to Pedro Morales. I wouldn't be surprised if a stab at the Intercontinental title was in the future for Jimmy Snuka. I might even bet the match at even money. □



IVAN KO

Unfortunately, the feud between Mr. Wrestling II and Ivan Koloff stretches far beyond one man's hatred for another. When nationalism gets involved, things can get ugly. Koloff blind-sides Mr. Wrestling II from the turnbuckles (left). II attempts to rip off the Russian's arm with a hammerlock (opposite right).

BEADS OF SWEAT accentuated the hammer-and-sickle tattoo on Ivan Koloff's bicep. On the design, the point of the sickle pierces the head of a bald eagle. Blood from the open wound mats the feathers of its body.

Inside the ring, the flesh-and-blood equivalent of the conflict represented by the tattoo was being carried out with full force, rage, and fury.

Representing the hammer-and-sickle, proud of his Russian heritage and the spirit of strength that goes with it, is Ivan Koloff.

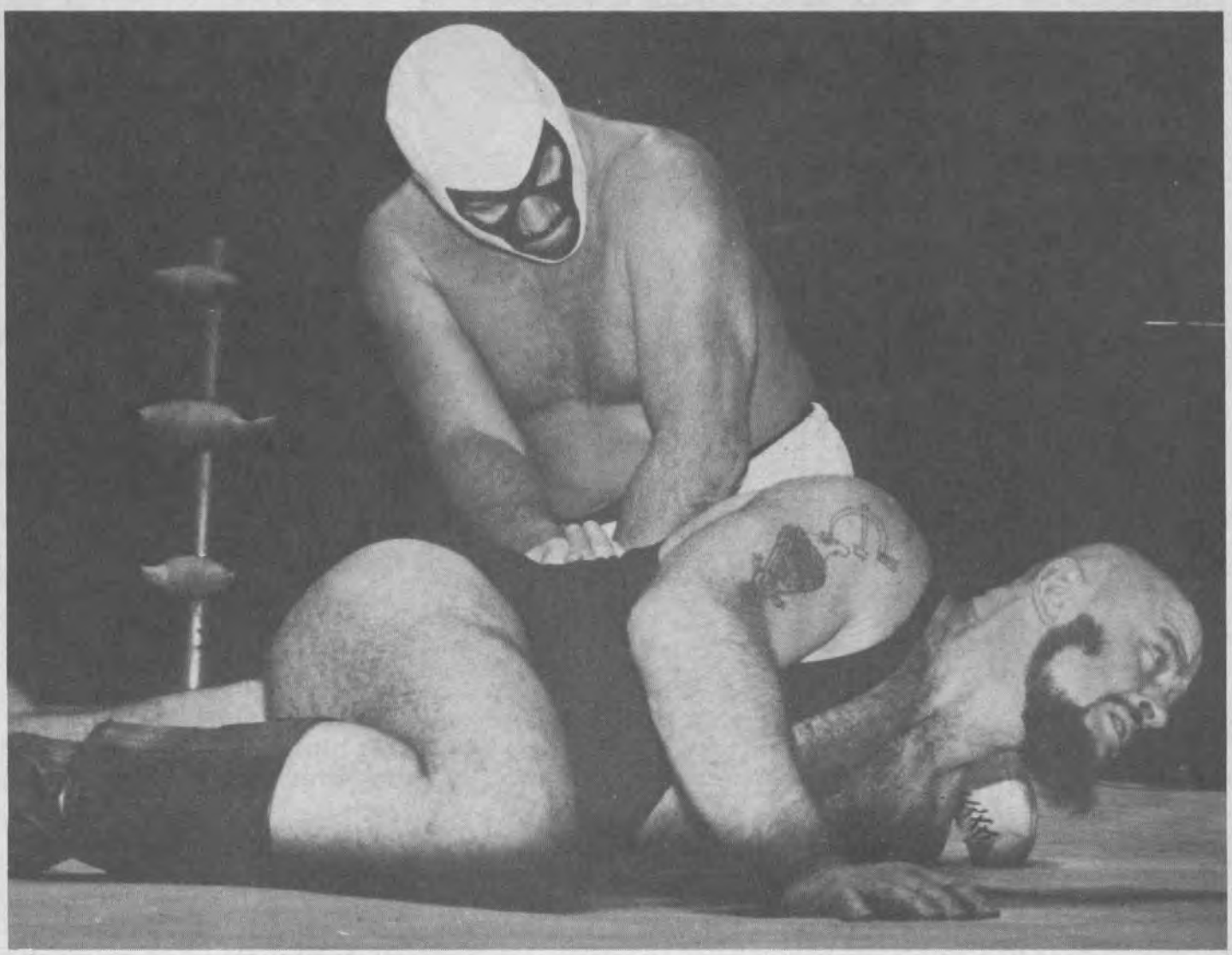
As American as the bald eagle, commanding respect from all corners of the wrestling world, is Mr. Wrestling II. His hallmark is sportsmanship and fair play, yet when faced with an opponent such as Koloff, II stands willing to defend himself by doing whatever is necessary to emerge victorious.

Witness the action: at first, the stalking. Circling left, each man looks for an opening through which to strike first. Defenses are up . . . senses sharp . . . reflexes poised and ready.

Koloff lunges first, dropping II to the mat with a thunderous slam that shakes the ring. The Russian

THE CO

LOFF VS. WRESTLING II



The ultimate in political cold war, Russia vs. United States, is represented by the ultimate in athletic cold war: Ivan Koloff vs. Mr. Wrestling II. Mutual hatred, despisal, and a thirst for blood was their starting point. This war is only now getting underway

follows up quickly with a series of blows to the head and body. Mr. Wrestling II has fallen to an early disadvantage in the match.

Continuing the onslaught, Koloff drags II to his feet, sends him flying against the ropes, and smashes his body as II rebounds back towards the center of the ring. Again, II falls to the mat in intense pain.

"American scum!" screams the Russian as he plants a foot into the small of II's back. Writhing in agony, II struggles to regain his strength.

As Koloff prepares to smash another foot into II's body, the masked wrestler lunges with his arms outstretched, gripping his opponent and pulling him off balance. Now it is Koloff's turn to hit the mat.

LD WAR EXPLODES!

PHOTOS BY BRAD McFARLIN

According to Koloff, the fact that Mr. Wrestling II is now campaigning in Florida clearly indicates that the Russian is the superior man. Mr. Wrestling II, the reigning Florida champion, says he is very willing to accept another Koloff challenge.

Rolling Koloff over onto his stomach, II applies pressure to the sensitive spinal area of the Russian. A horrifying shriek is heard in the arena, and a grim look of satisfaction is detectable underneath II's mask.

Koloff recoils in anger, and the action spills out of the ring. II has regained his strength and his senses, however, and is the first to strike. Grabbing Koloff by the back of the neck, II slams the Russian's head into the steel cornerpost. Koloff collapses onto the floor, nearly unconscious.

Mustering together just enough strength to rise to his feet, Koloff opens his weary eyes to see II standing triumphantly in the ring, his arms raised in victory. Angered by the sight, Koloff charges his prey, but is too slow as II dodges out of the way and again Koloff's head meets a cornerpost.

Mr. Wrestling II is tired. Sweat pours down his body, and even his mask is drenched. His chest heaves as he quickly breathes in air and strength.

Koloff climbs to the top turnbuckle, preparing to deliver a final, finishing blow to his opponent. II's senses are sharp, and as Koloff grabs II by the head, the masked man flips the Russian onto his back as the fans jump to their feet, cheering for II to complete the job.

Again the action spills out of the ring. Koloff bodyslams II onto the concrete floor. II retaliates with another shot to the cornerpost, opening a cut on Koloff's forehead. The action reaches a frenetic pace until . . .

Ten! The referee has counted both men out of the ring. With a smirk on his face, Koloff retreats to the safety of his dressing room. Mr. Wrestling II remains behind for a moment to drink in the accolades of the crowd.

Back in his dressing room, Koloff was pleased with the results of the match, despite the ruling of the referee.

"That imperialist scum of an American dog," Koloff snarled, "there is no reason for him to be able to continue in wrestling the way he is today. He deserves to be erased from the face of the earth.

"Just watch what happens as a result of this match," Koloff boasted. "As soon as he can, Mr. Wrestling II will leave this area for the safety of a group of wrestlers that he realizes he can easily beat. He will be running scared from the power of the Russian master of wrestling!"

Shortly after that very match, Mr. Wrestling II left Georgia to begin wrestling in Florida where he is now the reigning state champion.

"Koloff had absolutely nothing to do with my leaving Georgia," II asserted, "and the first chance I get, I'll be back in the ring with him to prove that the last thing I am doing is running scared from that Russian slime." □

WHAT THEY ARE SAYING

(Continued from Page 29)

TOMMY RICH

"I will be the next man in charge of this here NWA, I'll tell you. But I'm willing to take my time. I'm still a guy working his way into the prime of his career where Ric Flair, you know, is far past his prime. It's only a matter of time before I get rid of Ric, and I'm willing to wait a little bit."

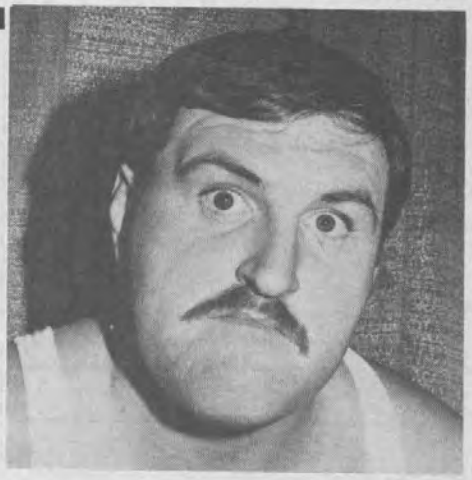
DAVID VON ERICH

"There are a lot of people that are criticizing me lately. They say I'm too brutal in the ring, they say I don't deserve respect. Well, people respect a champion, don't they? I don't see any of these critics wearing championship belts. As for brutality, wrestling is a brutal sport, and it's to be expected."

PEDRO MORALES

"I am ready for any kind of action, baby, any kind. I want to step into the ring with that bum Valentine, I want to show that scum that he can't insult me, he can't insult my people, he can't get away with any of it because he's going to have to answer to me, baby. I'm telling you, *any* kind of action . . . right now!"

SGT. SLAUGHTER



Damn these weak-kneed, lily-livered sons of sweathogs. All of them ought to be taught that when they step into the ring there's going to be hell to pay, especially if they think they're going to get a piece of my U.S. title. But just wait, this championship is only a stop on the way to the NWA title. Ric Flair: Beware!"

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BETWEEN FALLS

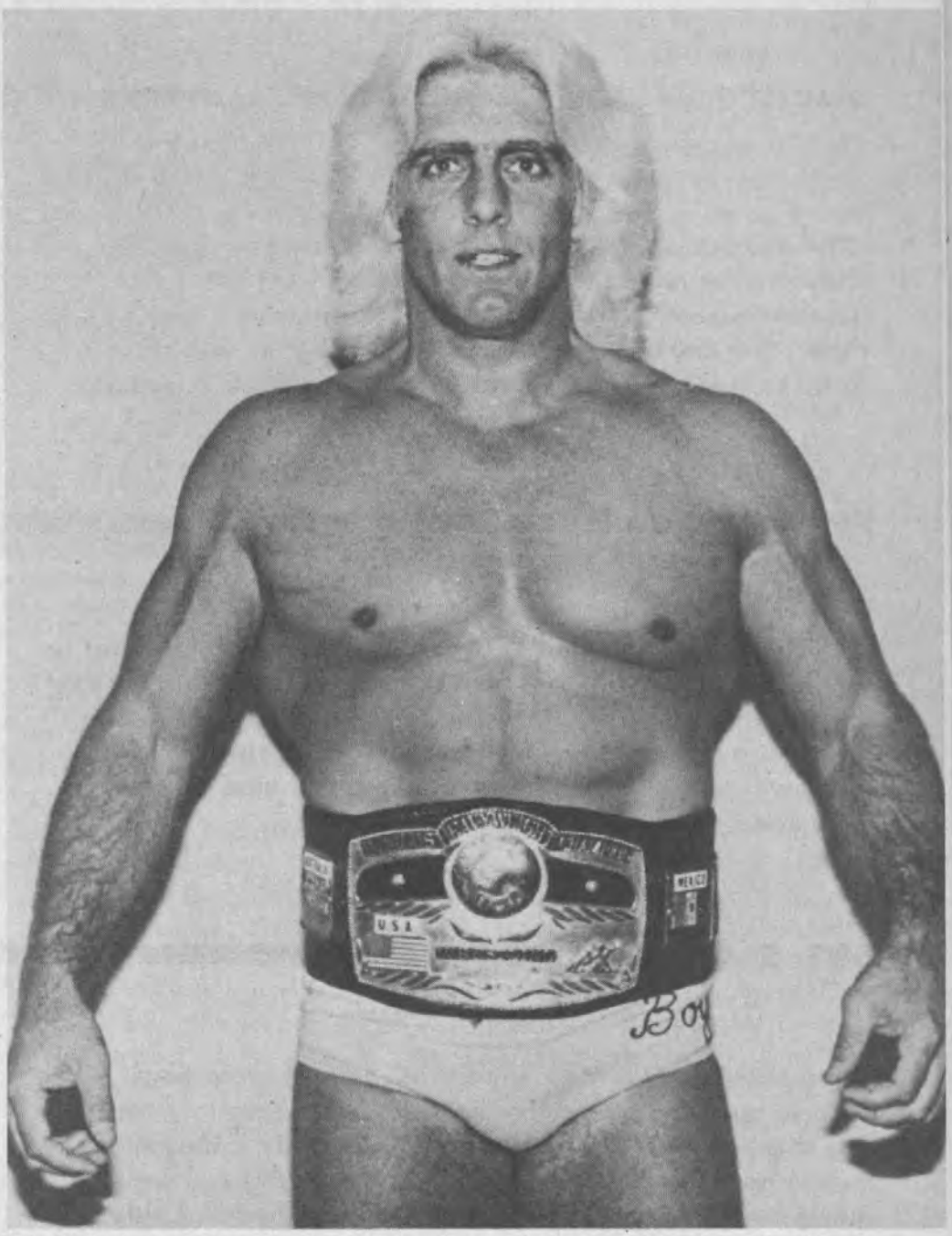
(Continued from Page 6)

DON'T PICK ON RIC

All you read in this magazine is how Ric Flair cheated in this and how he cheated in that. Everyone's saying he won the NWA title because Rhodes had a sore leg. That's not an advantage, that's stupidity on Rhodes' half. He knew his leg was injured and I'm sure he wasn't forced to wrestle.

Ric won the title because he was trained and ready. He worked hard for that belt and he deserves it. Don't worry Ric, I'll always back you up 150 percent.

GRACE ELRICK
Oshawa, Ont.



Ric Flair does not deserve the criticism he receives, according to reader Grace Elrick of Oshawa, Ontario. Flair, she writes, cannot be blamed for winning the NWA title from an injured Dusty Rhodes; Rhodes could have pulled out of the match. Anybody who works as hard as Flair, Elrick says, deserves to be champion and deserves the respect of the fans.

SEXY WRESTLERS

In the March 1982 issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, Sheila Duncan stated that Rick Steamboat is the sexiest wrestler today. I do agree that Steamboat is nice looking, but I have to say that Rick Martel is the sexiest wrestler today. Rick is handsome and has the charisma that add up to make him the sexiest wrestler around. He certainly has caused many feminine hearts to flutter since coming into this area. Not only that, he is a very caring and considerate person to the fans. If Ms. Duncan ever sees him, she will have to agree with the fans in this area.

Maybe one way to settle the question would be to have a contest and let the fans decide who is the sexiest wrestler.

PAM CORSON
Skowhegan, ME

(Editor's Note: Such a contest does indeed exist in the Summer 1982 edition of our sister publication, ***Wrestling Superstars****.)*

There have been several letters disputing the sexiness of wrestlers in your magazine. Although I'm sure these guys appreciate these votes of confidence, this has nothing to do with the sport. One should support a wrestler because of his ability, not his physique.

These letters insinuate that the only reason one watches wrestling is to admire the wrestlers, not the true competition of the sport. If sexiness plays such a large role in the wrestlers' careers, then why wasn't there a "Most Sexy" category in *PWI*'s recent "Year End Awards To The World's Greatest Wrestlers" (March 1982)? The answer is simple; the sexiness of the wrestlers is totally irrelevant.

LYNN HALL
JOYCE MICHAELS
Lenoir, NC

BACKS RODDY

I was very upset with the March 1982 edition of "Dressing Room Confidential." The way Stu Saks made it sound Roddy Piper only has fans in the Pacific Northwest. I live in the hills of West Virginia

Stu Saks was wrong in saying that Roddy Piper only has fans in the Pacific Northwest, writes Tammie Hanna of Frankford, West Virginia. Hanna sees a lot of good in Piper despite his tactics in the ring.

and I happen to like Roddy a lot. You also said he chose a seedy and underhanded path to success. I'm pretty sure he'd have gotten there anyway, but maybe not as fast.

Piper is a very good wrestler and I'll stick up for him anyday, no matter what he does. I'm sure that under that deep crust there's a good man fighting to get out.

TAMMIE HANNA
Frankford, WV ☐

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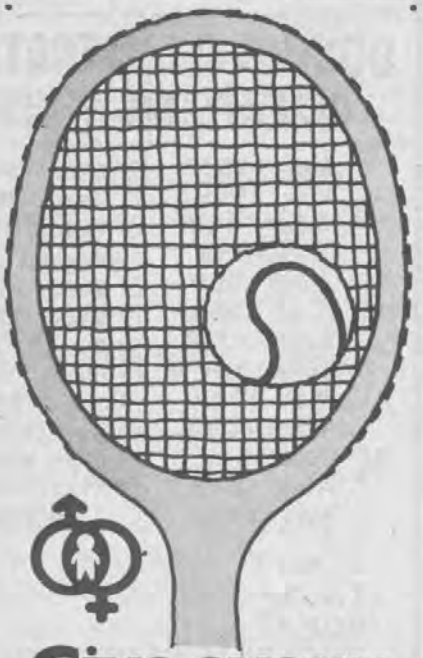

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(Continued from Page 8)

Bravo would like the opportunity to wrestle Bob Backlund for the WWF championship.

doctor finished his work and Bravo headed towards the shower.

"He is becoming a great, great wrestler," Carpentier said when Bravo left the room. "A few years ago, in California, we were both there at the same time. He had great potential then. Today, I do not think there is anyone with more talent. Bockwinkel, Flair, Backlund, they are all great wrestlers. But Dino, I think, is the best of all."

Carpentier is one of the most respected wrestlers in the world. His opinion is valued by all who know wrestling. Still one of the finest, most agile athletes in the sport, Carpentier receives a good share of main-event matches. He knows wrestling as well as anyone. If he says Bravo is good, well, there are few who would disagree.

"Carp's helped me a lot," Bravo said later, toweling off after his shower. "He's still a great wrestler, and he takes time to help me and the other young guys. Someday, when I win the world title, I'll dedicate it to Carp. He should have been champion years ago, but everybody ducked him. Hell, he could still give today's champions a helluva lot of trouble."

Bravo suddenly grew quiet and reflective. He finally admitted he was thinking about his future.

"I know that today I am at the top of my form. My weight is right, I feel good, strong—I don't think there is anyone who can defeat me fair and square. I know it's time for me to decide where Dino Bravo goes from here."

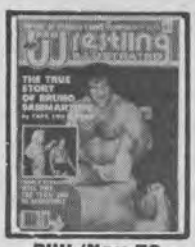
Would he go after Flair or Bockwinkel, two unpopular champions, or is he after Backlund's WWF belt?

"I would love to wrestle Bob," Bravo said. "We're friends—Bobby was up here wrestling a few months ago. But he's got a title I want. You know, I've never really spoken about this to anyone, but four years ago, when Superstar Graham was WWF champion, both Bob and I were top contenders for the title. He got his shot first. Who knows what would've happened if I wrestled Graham first."

Bravo shook his head and continued dressing. He gently folded the Canadian International belt and put it in his equipment bag. As he left the arena, he took one long look southward, perhaps trying to remember where he parked his car. Or maybe he was looking even farther south—about 400 miles. □

PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED BACK ISSUES

PWI/Sept 79
Color Starshot: Backlund & Steamboat



PWI/Nov 79
Color Starshot: Mil Mascaras

PWI/Jan 80
Color Starshot: Mr. Wrestling II

PWI/May 80
Color Starshot: Ric Flair

PWI/July 80
Color Starshot: The Sheik

PWI/Aug 80
Color Starshot: Koloff & Smirnoff

PWI/Sept 80
Color Starshots: Rick Steamboat, Humperdink's Army, Hulk Hogan

PWI/Nov 80
Color Poster: Mil Mascaras

PWI/Dec 80
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PWI/May 81
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PWI/Aug 81
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PWI/Oct 81
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PWI/Jan 82
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PWI/Feb 82
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PWI/Mar 82
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Color Poster: Nick Bockwinkel

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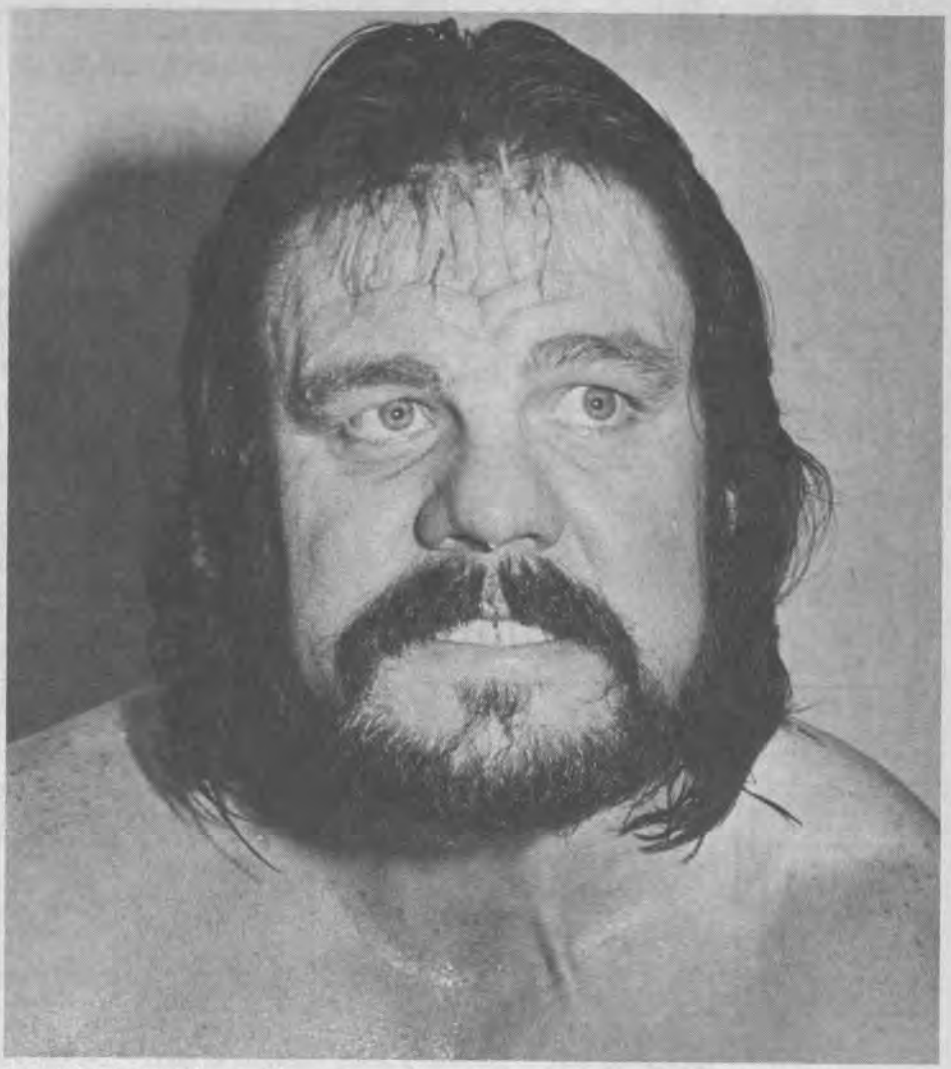
RINGSIDE

(Continued from Page 10)



Blackjack Mulligan (above), under the management of Fred Blassie, has returned to the WWF as a rulebreaker. Don Diamond (below) has brought his high-flying scientific brand of wrestling to Florida.

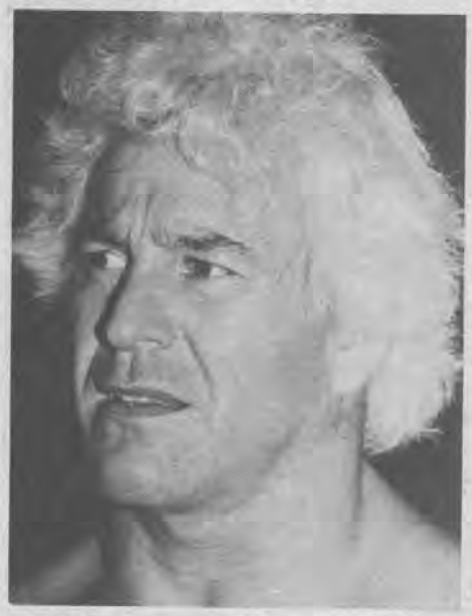
"It's not getting me anywhere!" To make matters even worse, Mulligan is back in the WWF under the management of Freddie Blassie.

The Grand Wizard has signed Bob Orton Jr. for a lengthy stay in the WWF . . . Killer Khan is headed to the Carolinas to battle Rick Steamboat. Khan and Steamboat became involved in a feud several years ago in the Orient . . . Jay Youngblood and Porkchop Cash are the new Mid-Atlantic tag kings having defeated Carl Fergie and Ox Baker.

Don Diamond has returned to Florida rings as has El Gran Apollo . . . Ray Stevens is vowing to end Austin Idol's career . . . Funk Jr. says he is real proud of the

way his friend David Von Erich is growing under the guidance of manager "King" James J. Dillon . . . Junkyard Dog has challenged Gino Hernandez to a Dog Collar Match.

Junkyard Dog (above) will soon meet Gino Hernandez in a Dog Collar Match. Ken Patera (below) defeated Hulk Hogan by disqualification.



The first match between Hulk Hogan and Ken Patera ended with Patera winning via disqualification . . . The Brisco brothers have regained the North American tag team belts from the Funks.

Ivan Putski has been hired by the WWF for several special referee assignments. "He is the fairest and most impartial man we can find," a WWF spokesman said. "Putski is one man who can definitely keep law and order in the ring." . . . Wildman Duggan, managed by Buck Robley, is the newest terror in Houston.

That's all for now. See you at ringside! □

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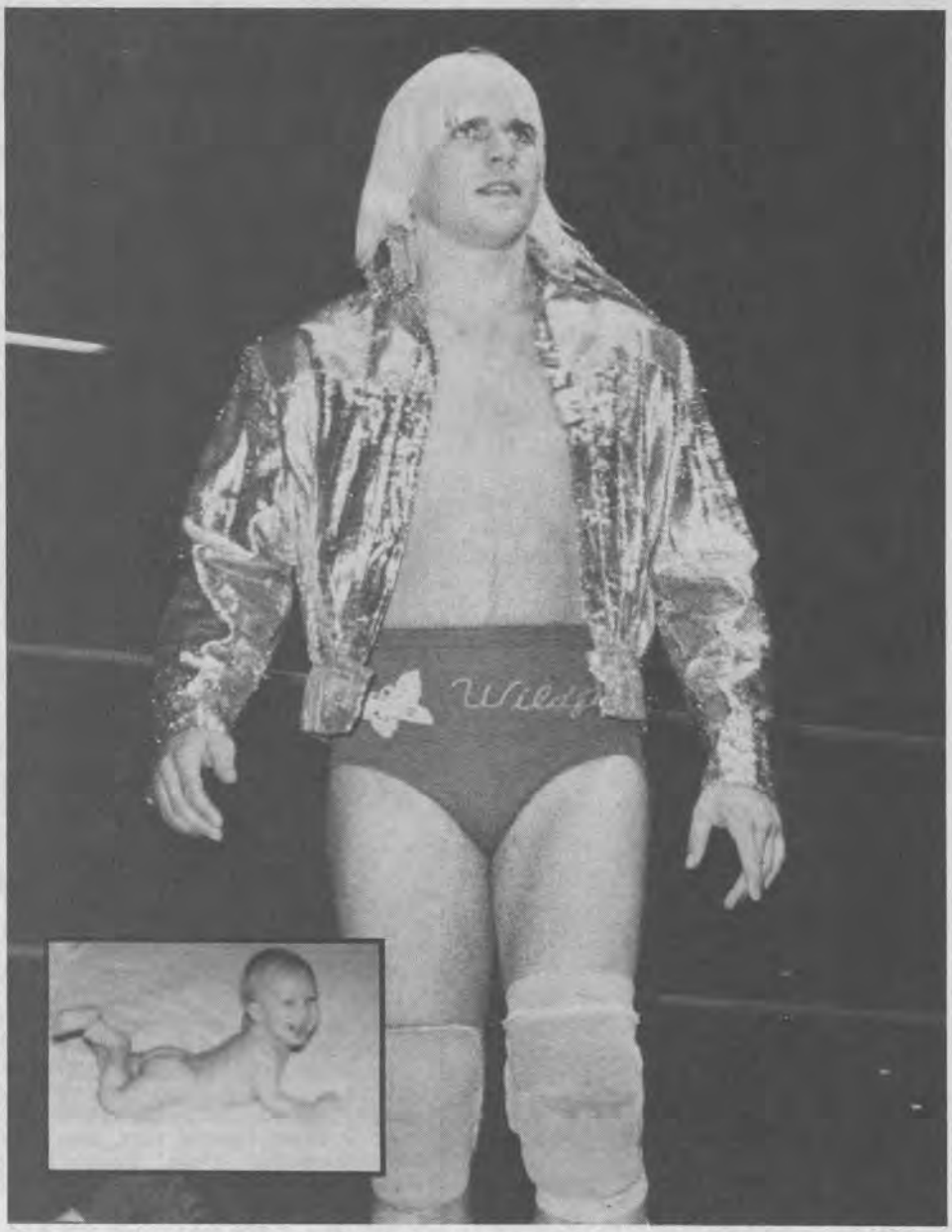
(Continued from Page 12)



The rare feature in WRESTLING SUPERSTARS traces Tommy's life from infancy (inset) to manhood. Not often will a wrestler allow such personal data to be published.

What was he like as a child? What is his family like? How did he get into wrestling? What are his interests? What kind of women does he like? Everybody knows Tommy Rich, the wrestler. But what do we know of his private life? Until just recently, very little.

Wrestling is the most revealing of all sports. Two men climb into a ring with nothing more than their wrestling tights and boots. It's muscle against muscle, mind against mind, heart against heart. They battle for all to see. Wins and losses measure the worth of the man. There is nothing and nowhere to hide. There is no privacy within a 20-foot square.

The very nature of their profession makes it so important to these men that they maintain a life away from the ring. Wrestlers, for the most part, do not like to reveal their private lives. As a magazine, we respect that desire. That is why you very rarely see articles in this magazine about the personal lives of the wrestlers.

If, however, a wrestler chooses

to speak about his private life, we are only too glad to provide our readers with everything we can. Well people, good news, Tommy Rich has come forth and revealed all.

"Hey, if you think you guys get a lot of letters asking about Tommy Rich, why don't you come over my house and check my mailbox?" Rich told me.

I did. Only the letters were not in the mailbox. They were in mail sacks (no relation to yours truly). "All these people are genuinely interested in me," Tommy said. "And as much as I'd like to write back to each and every one of them, there simply isn't enough time."

Tommy suggested that we publish a question and answer interview—not with Tommy Rich, the wrestler, but with Tommy Rich, the man. He even suggested a title: "Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Tommy Rich . . . But Were Afraid To Ask."

With the help of his lovely mother, Peggy, we sorted through each and every letter and compiled a list of the most-asked questions. Peggy also went through the old family album and provided us with some precious photographs of Tommy as a baby and as a boy growing up in Hendersonville, Tennessee.

The entire project took over nine hours and all agreed that it was time well spent. Of course, the true judges will be Tommy's fans. The 10-page feature appears in the Summer 1982 edition of our sister publication, *Wrestling Superstars*, which is currently on sale on the newsstands. (If you would like to receive a copy in the mail, send $2 to: T.V. Sports, P.O. Box 48, Rockville Centre, NY 11571 and ask specifically for *"Wrestling Superstars Summer 1982."* You'll have to wait about four to six weeks for delivery, but I can assure you that you will save this magazine for the rest of your life.) □

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ON ASSIGNMENT

(Continued from Page 14)

carries me to the press section so I won't fall on my face. "I've come to save Kabuki," I start to mumble. Rich sits me in my seat and tells me to shut up. I know I'm in no condition to cover a wrestling match, but an assignment is an assignment.

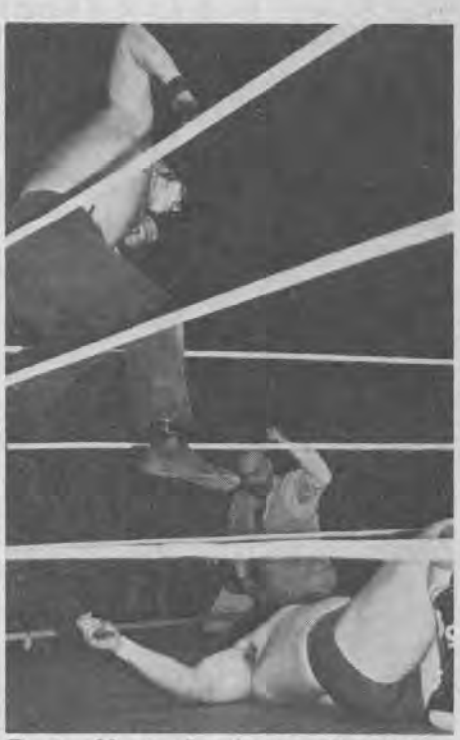
Time is racing and I can't keep up. Rich stays busy taking notes and doing interviews. My head is still spinning. I think back to the hotel bar. I seem to remember the guy with the pills having a half-smile on his face. Was I set up?

Suddenly, before I realize it, there is Kabuki in the ring. I've heard a lot about him. The man with the green fog. His manager, Gary Hart, has been an acquaintance of mine for a few years. But in my state of chaos, I can barely recognize him. Kabuki exhales in our direction and the green stuff gets all over my new suit. Hart waves to me, smiling knowingly.

Kabuki starts beating up on some poor defenseless opponent. He's using his martial arts stuff and his nerve holds. With the painkilling pills distorting my vision, the match looks unbearably brutal. I'm screaming for the referee to stop the bout.

The lights are spinning and I think I'm going to pass out. Kabuki pins the guy for a two-count and then lifts his shoulders off the canvas so he can pour on some more punishment. Hart is looking right at me and smiling.

The match is over and I insist on going to the dressing room with Rich. Kabuki's shoulders are green from that stuff he exhales. His hair is all over his face. "You are a very cruel man," I say, doing my best in my unstable condition to maintain



Gary Hart (background) directs Kabuki to leap from the turnbuckles upon a helpless foe.

my objectivity. Kabuki just grins and breathes that green slime all over me. I mean it was a bull's-eye. It burned like fire and the pain was intense. All I remember is Rich standing up and saying, "You didn't have to do that!" Hart was laughing. I recall him pointing at me and saying,"The guy's had it coming for years."

Rich interviewed Kabuki while I was taken to the hospital. Just a couple of rotten pills somebody gave me, the doctor said. Be good as new in the morning.

Rich did a helluva interview until Hart got angry at a few accusations and told him to leave. "Strange dude, that Kabuki," Rich said. "Kind of guy who makes you want to take two showers a day." In the morning, I *did* take two showers. And I gargled for five minutes with mouthwash. Hope Kabuki does the same, I thought to myself as I dressed and went downstairs to look for the guy with the funny little pills. ☐

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IN FOCUS

(Continued from Page 18)

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FLAIR VS. STEAMBOAT

In one of the more shocking turnabouts in recent months, Rick Steamboat and Ric Flair have thrown away their friendship as a result of events during Flair's NWA title defense. What had once been mutual respect had disintegrated into violent hatred. As friends, champion Flair and challenger Steamboat each understood the obligations and necessary actions of the other. Yet sadly, each man overstepped his bounds, causing chaos during the match, and open declarations of war between the two grapplers. It's a shame to see two admirable wrestlers turn against each other like this, but perhaps the price one must pay for being the champion. Only Ric Flair could answer that question for sure.

ATTENTION!

With national defense spending on the increase and the continuation of draft registration, it comes as no surprise that militarism is on the rise in wrestling as well. Witness Private Nelson, protege of Sgt. Slaughter. He hasn't mastered the Cobra Clutch yet, but that's no doubt a matter of time. Nevertheless, Nelson exhibits the same sort of lust for brutality that characterizes Slaughter's every match. Not only does he wrestle on his own, but Nelson can also be seen at ringside standing at firm attention during many of Slaughter's U.S. title defenses. As Slaughter hands down the belt to Nelson prior to the start of the match, he orders Nelson to guard the belt with his life. An obediant "Yes, sir!" is snapped back, and Nelson keeps one eye on the strap while the other studies his mentor for new maneuvers. Fans would do well to keep both eyes on this unpredictable wrestler.

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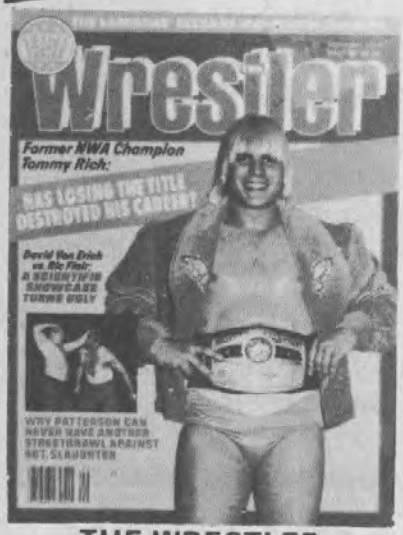

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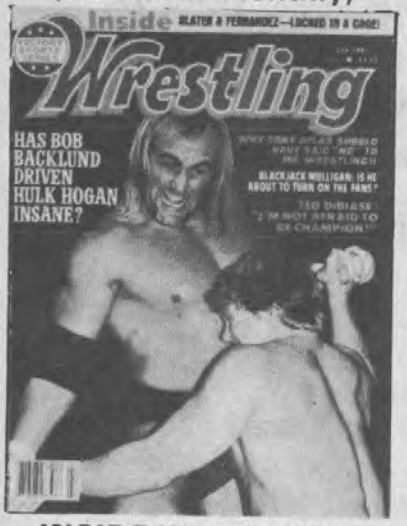

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PRESS CONFERENCE

(Continued from Page 25)

after one thing: my belt. That puts a lot of pressure on me both physically and mentally.

CRAIG PETERS: It's a lot different than, say, being a contender to Dusty's title.

FLAIR: Absolutely. Once that belt is handed to you, you're not the same person. I knew it as soon as that gold buckle touched my hand. The thought ran through my mind that from this second on, since I am now the champion, my life will never be the same again. And it hasn't been the same.

APTER: What's it been like?

FLAIR: It's been like some sort of crazy Battle Royal or something, except that it's 50 against one. Fifty contenders against one champion. There's nothing like it anywhere else in sport, and it's a terrible amount of pressure to put on one man. If you're a contender, you can lose a match, and there will always be tomorrow's match, or the next day. For me, I can't afford to let my concentration lapse for even a second. If I lose, that's it, the whole championship goes out the window. It's a matter of having everything I've geared my life to being put on the line each and every match. It's a do

"I can't afford to let my concentration lapse for even a second. If I lose it, that's it, the whole championship goes out the window."

Ric Flair goes into heavy concentration before an NWA title defense.

or die situation each time I step into the ring.

BROCK: Well, it was sure do or die when you wrestled Steamboat.

FLAIR: Yeah, I guess so. That was a pretty unfortunate situation, but I didn't ask for what happened.

PETERS: The two of you have been such good friends these past few years. Why is it that now you're swearing to injure Steamboat the next time you two meet?

FLAIR: Like I said, I didn't ask for what happened. You were there, you all saw the match. It started out very scientifically, very much a situation where we respected each other. I said on television that Steamboat is my

friend, but that I'm also going to do whatever I have to do to keep the belt.

APTER: The two of you even shook hands before the match began.

FLAIR: Right. Steamboat knew what my job was and I knew what his job was. We both realized that neither one of us could back down from our goals, and our friendship had to be put on the back burner. But when the match moved from a respectful scientific one to a filthy, dirty brawl, that's when all bets were off. Steamboat walked into territory where he had absolutely no business being. He overstepped his bounds, and he damn well broke the bonds of friendship. Respect for another's abilities and obligations is one thing, but sheer outright abuse of another man, particularly in light of our former friendship—that's right, *former* friendship—well, that's another thing altogether. I swear, next time I meet Steamboat in the ring, I'm going to kick his butt all over the arena.

BROCK: It's a shame to see your friendship fall apart like that.

FLAIR: Yeah, but what's done is done. Now I've got to do what I've got to do, and I'm afraid Steamboat isn't going to be pleased about it one damn little bit.

APTER: You don't sound as if you have any regret in your voice about what happened.

FLAIR: You're probably right. In fact, I'm looking forward to meeting Steamboat again. Our next match is going to make the last one look like a picnic . . . but it won't be any picnic for Steamboat, I can assure everyone of that. □

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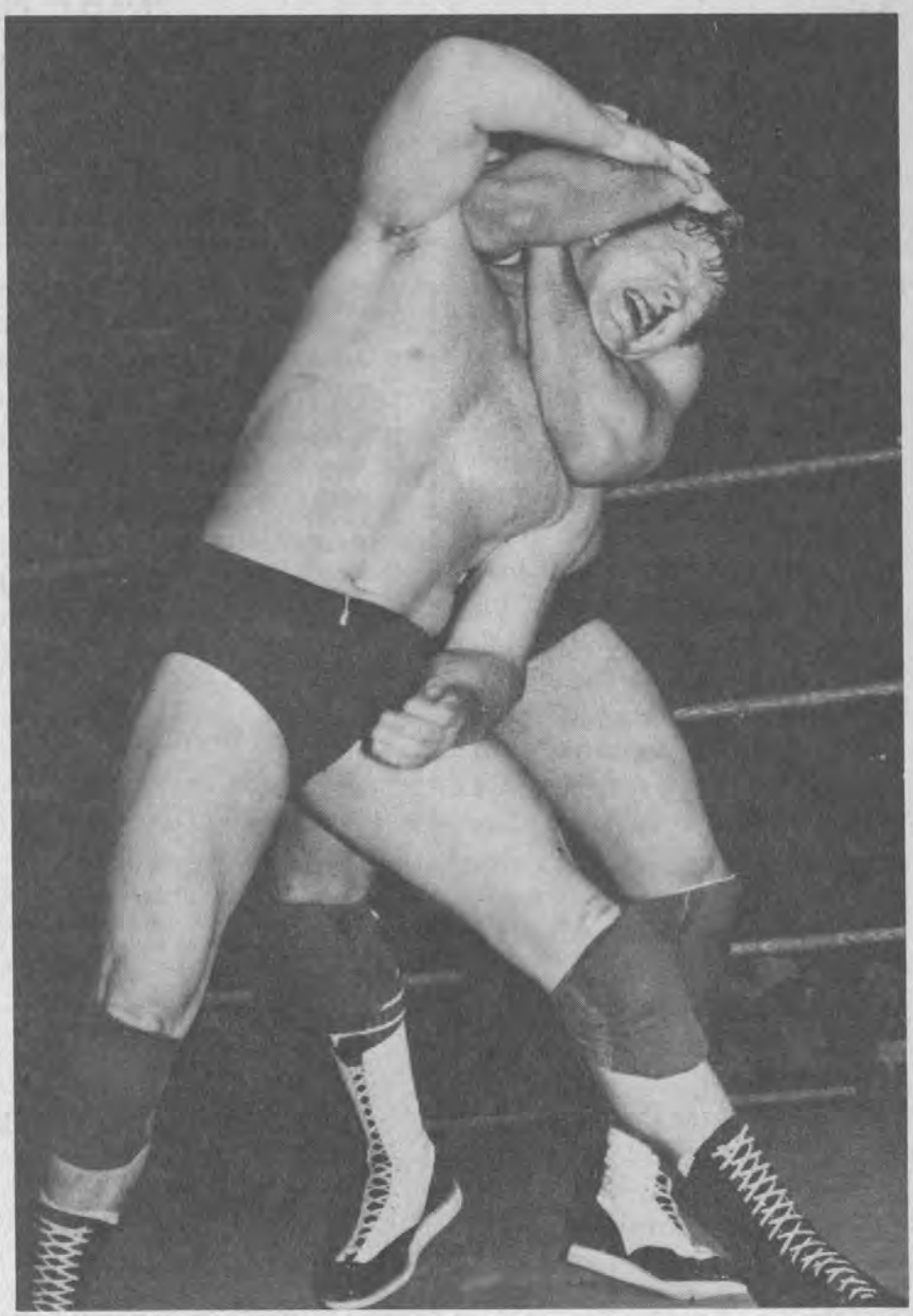
VENTURA & ADONIS

(Continued from Page 34)



Adonis traps Backlund in "Goodnight Irene," but the WWF champion finds an escape. According to Blassie's plan, Adonis is setting Backlund up for his next match against Ventura.

awesome combination. Alone, Ventura poses another substantial threat to Backlund's belt.

"That weasel Backlund is not going to escape," assures Ventura. "Sooner or later, the Minnesota stump-jumper will trip himself up in the ring, and it is then that he will fall prey to 'The Body,' the strongest and most beautiful man in all of wrestling."

Blassie is overjoyed to have both of these men under his control.

"This twin terror of Adonis and Ventura is going to gain control of the WWF before I'm through with them," assured Blassie. "Each of them has risen to the top spots of contention, and it will be only a matter of time before one of them demolishes Backlund and takes the belt for himself."

There is no plan set as to how Blassie will achieve his goal of

WWF mastery, but he's got a general idea of how to go about it.

"It's very simple, really, so much so that the genius of its simplicity will totally escape Howdy Doody and he'll fall into the agony of defeat before he even realizes what's happened to him," said Blassie.

"Adonis will be going after his title along with Irene," Blassie continued, "and then if he doesn't get the belt because of some petty technicality like what went on in his first title match with Backlund [Backlund was declared too bloody to continue], he'll try again. Or if not him, I'll send my man Ventura. Then if Ventura is unsuccessful somehow, Adonis goes in again. And on and on and on.

"Sooner or later," Blassie gloated, "my one-two combination is going to break Backlund's spirit, it's going to wear him down to nothing. Then it will be a simple matter to just step on into the ring and take the title away from him. Hell, I may even go into the ring myself against Backlund. Picture that. Me, Fred Blassie, champeen of the world!"

Suppose, then, that either Adonis or Ventura is successful in Blassie's quest for the WWF championship. What happens to the other man? Will he be left out in the cold to fend for himself, perhaps to develop a hate for the manager who discarded him and the partner who abandoned him and beat him to the title?

"Don't be ridiculous," cried Blassie with a grin, "when one of my men gets Backlund's title, the other one is going to go after that greasy, slimy Pedro Morales for the Intercontinental belt. I'm telling you, it won't be long before Adonis and Ventura take over the championships, and then it will be Fred Blassie who rules over the WWF! Nineteen eighty-two is my year, and it will be a year that nobody—especially Backlund—will ever forget!" □

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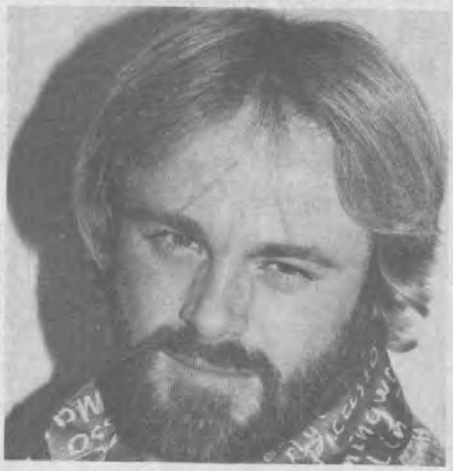

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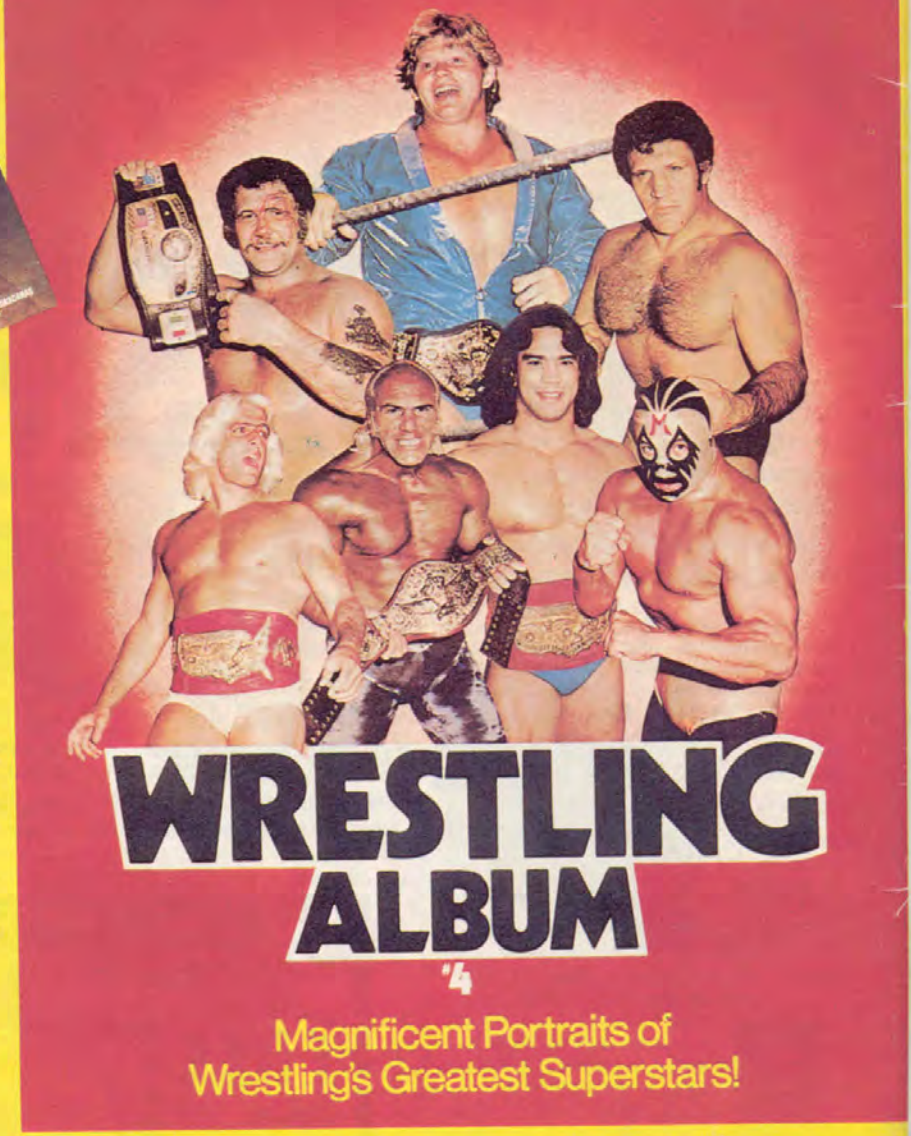

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